Headteacher Perspectives On The Reasons Pupils Are Permanently Excluded From Special Schools For Pupils With Severe Learning Difficulties

Thesis

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This study constitutes my own work. In addition neither the whole, nor any part, of the study has previously been submitted for a degree or other qualification of any university or institution in the UK or elsewhere.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Can I thank my wife (Elizabeth) and family (Emily, Alice, Jack & Annie) for their moral support, for "*just doing without me*" at times and for allowing me this self-indulgent hobby. In addition I am grateful to my parents for instilling a basic belief in the importance of learning.

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To everyone involved I make a commitment to use this work as constructively as possible and in the best interest of the children and families concerned.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Advisory Centre for Education
AMA	Association of Metropolitan Authorities
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education & Skills
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DoH	Department of Health
EBD	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
FE	Further Education
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
INSET	In-Service Education and Training
LEA	Local Education Authority
LMS	Local Management of Schools
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
NAHT	National Association of Headteachers
NERS	National Exclusions Reporting System
NUT	National Union of Teachers
OfSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PANDA	Performance Assessment & National Contextual Data
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SHA	Secondary Headteachers Association
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
SSI	Social Services Inspectorate
TASH	The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps[1]
TES	Times Educational Supplement
UWT	Union of Women Teachers

[1] Formerly The Association for the Severely Handicapped).

SUMMARY.

There is little existing research on permanent exclusions from special schools. This study focuses on Headteacher perspectives. It reports interviews with five Headteachers with recent experience of exclusion and a survey, sent to all maintained, non-residential SLD schools in England. The survey received a 72% response.

Approximately twenty-five pupils are permanently excluded from SLD schools in England each year. Whilst the trend in special school exclusions has mirrored those of mainstream schools, little variation was evident in the number of SLD exclusions between 1994/5-1998/9.

The following factors were identified:

The need to protect staff and pupils from physical harm is a key imperative. All excluded pupils had exhibited violent behaviours prior to their exclusion. The allocation of staff presented the main method of risk management and LEAs were perceived to readily provide support under these circumstances. Whilst staff numbers are important, maintaining staff confidence can be equally critical.

Exclusion was linked to perceptions about whether the school had the capacity to bring about an improvement in behaviour. This involved judgements about whether the placement might be detrimental to the pupil's best interests and whether his/her needs would better be met elsewhere.

The integrity of the intervention was linked to the degree with which consistency could be achieved. Whilst pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour attract support from many services this was perceived to be poorly coordinated.

The most important form of consistency is that between home and school. Some parents were felt to undermine the intervention, others were perceived to be so "*worn-down*" by supporting the child, that they lacked the capacity to be more constructively involved. Most Headteachers were critical of the level of support available for parents. Children exhibiting more extreme challenges tended to be excluded from respite care. Where pupils required residential care this was rarely available locally.

Headteachers were concerned about the impact of challenging pupils on the school's ability to provide for the needs of other pupils. The juxtaposition of physically vulnerable pupils with challenging pupils generated particular tensions. The increasing diversity of need being catered for within SLD schools was also associated with difficulties in managing behavioural challenges.

Placement change would normally be mediated through re-assessment. Permanent exclusion however might still occur if a significant increase in the level of challenge overtook these procedures. Problems could also arise where parents were opposed to a residential school placement, yet no local options were available.

1 INTRODUCTION.

Bird et al. (1996) argue that the key criteria upon which research should be evaluated are validity and relevance. Validity will be defended in the main body of this study. I would argue that the research focus is relevant for the following reasons.

Permanent exclusion from mainstream schools has been the focus of considerable interest and much public debate over the past decade. This has stimulated numerous articles in the media (e.g., Cassidy 1999), government circulars (e.g., DfEE, 1994d) and academic research (e.g., Godfrey and Parsons, 1998). Despite the level of attention devoted to this issue, little at all is known about the permanent exclusion of pupils from special schools (Blyth and Milner, 1996; Osler et al., 2001). In my role as an educational psychologist working with pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLDs), I am particularly conscious of the lack of research relating to SLD special schools. We know that the prevalence of behaviour difficulties in people with a SLD reaches a peak during the age of statutory schooling (Qureshi and Alborz, 1992). This can also have a significant impact on their school life (Mental Health Foundation, 1997). However even such basic information, as the prevalence of exclusions from SLD schools has not yet been established[2]. Articles that refer to special schools (as a generic group) suggest that the number of exclusions have been rising over the past decade, mirroring the trend in mainstream schools (Parsons et al., 1995). What is happening, however, is confused, as the mechanism by which LEAs maintain and the DfEE reports such data, does not allow this information to be disaggregated by type of special school. Consequently it is unclear which special schools are responsible for this, and what mechanisms underlie this phenomenon.

The permanent exclusion of pupils from mainstream schools represents a complex and contentious policy issue, yet this is the main target group for the legislation. The use of such procedures within a special school evokes more contradictions and conflicts with legislation designed to protect the special educational needs (SENs) of the children concerned. Osler et al. (2001) suggest that LEAs should set targets which work towards the non-exclusion of pupils from special schools. I would concur with this sentiment. However, it should not be construed as a criticism of special schools nor is it synonymous with the notion that all special schools should be able to provide for all pupils. Irrespective of whether school or LEA practice is deemed to be at fault, exclusion from a special school appears to represent a fundamental breakdown in a local authority's duty of care to these pupils. The majority of pupils within an SLD school will have been known to Health, Education and Social Services from an early age. They should be subject to a Statement of SEN, although this is not inevitably the case (Male, 1996b), to which all of these agencies will have been asked to contribute (DfE, 1994a). In addition the LEA has a statutory duty to identify, review and provide for the changing needs of these children. Despite these safeguards, the educational placement of some of these vulnerable pupils is being prematurely terminated via exclusion. Two central tenets of the Children Act 1989 (DoH, 1989) are that the local authority should act in the best interest of the child, and that services should work collaboratively to achieve this goal. It is difficult to argue that exclusion is in the obvious interest of the children involved.

Blyth and Milner (1996) suggest that the emergence of the "*education market*" has been instrumental in reducing the willingness of Headteachers to maintain difficult pupils on roll. Whilst this has face validity within the mainstream sector, it is difficult to see how this might apply to special schools. Special schools fulfil a distinct role and the LEA has more direct control over access. Equally the use of exclusion to punish the child or to place pressure on the

[2] This omission has recently been addressed with the publication of the "*PANDA Data*" (OfSTED, 1999, 2000 & 2001). The first of these was released after the start of this study.

family to guarantee the child's behaviour in school, does not sit easily within an SLD school scenario.

Not only is there a gap in our knowledge but it is also an important deficit, as it represents a critical point of breakdown. Appeals rarely lead to the pupil's reinstatement (DfE, 1993a) and parents tend to become increasingly disenfranchised from subsequent decisions taken about their child (Blythe and Milner 1994). Exclusion may even deny the child their statutory right to education, particularly in the case of a pupil excluded from a special school (Osler et al., 2001).

Despite the emphasis in the Children Act 1989 (DoH, 1989) that local authorities should aspire to keep children with their families wherever possible, pupils excluded from SLD schools are often placed in residential schools. However some parents, of children with challenging behaviour, have expressed concern that their children are placed in settings which offer poor quality of care solely because there is nowhere else for them to go (Russell, 1997b). There has been increasing concern, amongst inspectors, that such placements may constitute costly and poor child-care practice (Keirnan and Keirnan, 1994). Despite such concerns Abbott et al. (2000) highlighted significant inadequacies in monitoring arrangements. Few LEAs were aware of their obligation (DoH, 1989) to inform social services if a child is placed residentially; the majority of LEAs do not systematically attend annual reviews and where social service departments are aware, they do not always fulfill their statutory duty to conduct six monthly reviews.

Inevitably residential special school placements tend to be at a distance from the child's home, thus segregating the child from their local community (Gale, 1995). In addition most LEAs confine financial assistance to the pupils travel to and from school, and deem further contact with parents as not being their responsibility (Abbott et al., 2000). Once placed, few children ultimately return

to his/her local community (Lyon, 1991). Understanding why such breakdowns occur may have important implications for policy and practice.

As a LEA officer I have a commitment to improve current practice. I equally believe that policy should develop rationally, on the basis of evidence. I am concerned about the premise that a pupil might need to be permanently excluded from any special school. Whilst the arguments are often confused, in public debate, by the blame attributed to the pupil, this is less tenable within an SLD context. Although the behaviour may present significant challenges to staff, it is difficult to argue that the pupil is responsible or at fault. These pupils actually represent an extremely dependent population; consequently the onus must lie primarily on the staff providing support. However LEA's tend to respond as if exclusion were an unavoidable necessity, rather than a more fundamental indictment of the policy, practice and procedures for which they are responsible. As well as supporting the plight of those pupils at risk of exclusion, improvements in current arrangements may have ramifications for the wider group of pupils presenting behavioural challenges within these schools.

Having worked in the education system for nearly thirty years I would not claim to embark on this research without any preconceived views. I do not, however, have any vested personal or professional interest in the outcome of this study. I genuinely seek a better understanding of the issues and the type of response that may be required.

2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

Headteachers play a central role in deciding whether a pupil should be permanently excluded. Their views are consequently the focus of this study. As little is known about this subject, I also propose to establish basic information about the types of pupils permanently excluded from these schools and to clarify the context within which such decisions are made. The focus will consequently be on the following questions:

1. **How many pupils are being permanently excluded from SLD schools?** The prevalence of permanent exclusions from this sector of education is currently uncertain. Whilst there is some evidence to suggest that the number of exclusions from special schools have been increasing over the past decade, it is unclear whether this generalization applies to SLD schools.

2. **What factors lead the Headteacher of an SLD school to decide a child should no longer continue to attend?** The primary focus of this study is Headteacher's perspectives on exclusion. This also represents a gap in the research on exclusion. There is little qualitative research on: "*how exclusion fits into the life of schools; how they are viewed by teachers and Headteachers*" (Osler et al., 2001 p.16). Of particular interest here are the factors that cause Headteachers to decide a pupil's placement is no longer tenable.

3. **Why is a permanent exclusion used, as opposed to other options open to the school?** Having decided that a pupil's placement is no longer viable, it poses the question of why this should lead to a permanent exclusion. A change of placement via more normal channels (i.e. the LEA making a placement in a different school) would be the anticipate procedure.

4. **Are changes in education policy affecting exclusion patterns?** The suggestion that the number of special school exclusions is mirroring the trend apparent in mainstream schools is intriguing. One of the issues to be explored is whether this actually applies to SLD special schools. If it does apply, it poses further questions about the factors that are responsible. The mechanisms currently used to explain the trend in mainstream schools does not obviously generalize to special schools.

3 ISSUES OF DEFINITION

Perspectives

This study is concerned with perspectives and the concept warrants consideration. A perspective has been defined as a mental view conceived from a particular vantage point (Reber, 1995, 2nd Edition). Perspectives constitute a personal interpretation of the interactions in which people engage. Consequently knowledge of perspectives provides an insight into a person's subjective understanding or reality (Kutnick and Jules, 1993). Whilst an individual's perspective may be unique, Woods (1976) further argues that there is likely to be a commonality of perceptions ("*group perspective*") amongst individuals who work within similar settings and share similar problems. In this way the understanding of an individual Headteacher's perspective can, on a cumulative basis, lead to constructs by which we can access Headteachers' understanding of permanent exclusion.

Discussion of perspectives poses questions about how meaning becomes attributed to experience. Heider (1958 - cited in Försterling, 2001) assumed that individuals strive to make events understandable through the use of rational methods, akin to those adopted when exploring causal relationships (discussed in more detail on page 69). He proposed that experience gives rise to attributions to the person, the stimulus, or specific circumstances (environment). For example if a piece of music is enjoyed on one occasion and not another it is likely that the explanation would be attributed to a difference in personal state and not the song. Research has provided qualified support for the use of this process (McArthur, 1972) and has also lead to refinements to such models. Consideration about whether the causes of events are inevitably sought also lead to the notion of the development of naïve causal theories or schemata[3] (Kelley, 1972 - cited in Försterling, 2001). It is suggested that these schemata

[3] Kelley (1972 in Försterling, 2001, p.67) defines schemata as "*a repertoire of abstract ideas about the operation and interaction of causal factors*".

are only consciously re-examined when contradictory evidence is encountered. Consequently one might assume that failure is more likely to instigate a higher degree of causal search than success. Research also identified discrepancies between actual and predicted attributions. Unsystematic deviations suggest that people may make errors in causal ascriptions[4]. Other deviations occur on a systematic basis and Försterling (2001) documents several types of bias:

:

- Correspondence bias - a preference to make attributions to the person (traits and disposition) rather than situational factors.
- Tendencies to neglect information about how other people behave in similar situations. This has been interpreted as indicating that commitment to schemata, causes conflicting information to be disregarded.
- The false consensus effect – a tendency to assume that one's own perspective is widely shared and discrepant views are atypical.
- Self-serving bias. This is a tendency to attribute success to internal (dispositional) factors and failure to external cause. For instance, Miller (1996) noted that teachers were ten times more likely to attribute success, to their own actions rather than those of parents, despite operating a joint strategy (between home and school).
- Actor-observer bias – a tendency for participants to explain an event with reference to situational factors and for observers' to make personal (dispositional) attributions.
- Intergroup attribution bias – a tendency to attribute the positive behaviour of one's own group more to internal causes than that of out-group members. The converse also applies.

[4] There have been concerns that the notion of error may be a function of inadequacies in the experimental design. Cheng and Novick (1990) found that when more information was provided, responses were more consistent with those predicted.

Whether such biases exist is disputed, as is the underlying explanation. For example, it has been hypothesised that the self-serving bias occurs in order to nurture perceptions of self-esteem. Conversely Miller and Ross (1975) suggest that only the person concerned would be fully aware of the range of strategies they had used to address the failure. Hence perceiving the failure to be external would be consistent with Kelley's model of attribution. Although the debate has no conclusive outcome it serves to highlight the distinction between perspectives and other types of data.

The way we perceive events is an active cognitive process, in which we do not passively assimilate stimulus but actually impose meaning on it. Amending the common adage "*seeing is believing*" Scwartz and Ogilvy (in Lincoln and Guba, 1985 p.62) suggest that "*What we believe determines much of what we see (believing is seeing)*". Unlike other forms of data, perspectives represent an interpretation of events. It consequently has an ephemeral quality, in that perspectives will change over time, in the light of experience. Most importantly the subject may have no conscious view of the issue until we actually pose the question; consequently we can be said to be creating the phenomena studied.

Attempts to access perspectives will also be subjected to interpretation. Hence responses will be influenced by the subject's perception of a number of issues; who is asking the question, the purposes behind questions, the likely future audience of the response etc. The extent to which these factors can be controlled will determine the degree to which we can claim the response to be authentic. Authentic in this context being defined as a "*spontaneous and honest account of the respondent's thinking.*"(Cooper, 1993, p.129). Whilst we can never be certain of whether we achieve authenticity, we can minimise the chances of an unauthentic response. This however is not the same as capturing an objective reality. Essentially this study is phenomenological in that it is concerned with the individuals' account of reality, rather than an objective reality itself. The study merely aims to reflect Headteachers' account of exclusion, as seen from

their local frames of reference and from their own socially situated phenomenal world (Henwood and Pidgeon, 1995).

SLD SCHOOL

The history of people with severe learning difficulties (referred to throughout this document as SLD) has been marked by changes in terminology. The Warnock report (DES, 1978) promoted the term SLD to describe children previously referred to as mentally handicapped and defined in regulations as severely educational sub-normal (SEN-S).

Prior to 1971 children with SLDs were deemed ineducable. They were excluded from the education system and made the responsibility of the local Health Authority. Some children were placed in centres, which became junior training centres under the Mental Health Act, 1959. Responsibility, however, transferred to LEAs following the Education (Handicapped Children) Act, 1970. The mechanism by which LEAs register special schools is currently defined in the Education Act, 1996. This study relates exclusively to special schools registered with the DfES as catering for children with SLDs. The emphasis is consequently on the status of the school rather than whether pupils can be said to have a SLD (no matter how defined).

This distinction is important. Contrary to labeling, special schools do not cater for a homogeneous group of children. Male (1996b) found that almost half of SLD schools perceived that approximately 10% of pupils did not meet the criteria of SLD. Placement was either made because of gaps in local provision or through parental preference. Conversely a survey of MLD schools, (Male, 1996a) noted that over 90% of schools reported having 10% of pupils who might better be described as SLD. This implies that the majority of children are likely to meet the criteria associated with the school's designation, but there is substantial variation. Whilst it follows that pupils attending SLD schools are likely to have a SLD, this should not be an automatic assumption.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

By the term challenging behaviour I refer to pupils who present:

> *"behaviour which presents a serious risk to the physical safety of the individual or those around them or which prevents the individual taking part in everyday life in the community"* (Mansell, 1994 p.5).

The "*Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps*" (TASH) originally adopted the term. It emphasizes a shift from conceptualizing behaviour difficulties as being inherent in individuals; to focus on the way services perceive such behaviours. It does not define the concept with reference to specific behaviours, and implies that if services could meet such demands they would cease to be *"challenges"* (Blunden and Allen, 1987). Hence it is the challenge to services and not the behaviour, which is socially constructed (Jones and Miller, 1994). Whether behaviour is regarded as challenging will depend on a variety of factors including the skills and experience of the staff concerned.

Reference to behavioural challenges in this context is subordinate to the act of exclusion and merely elaborates the grounds on which the action has been taken. No attempt has been made to define, quantify, validate or compare the level of difficulty pupils present. The definition is consequently dependent on the subjective perception of Headteachers.

PERMANENT EXCLUSION

As exclusion is central to this study, the concept warrants closer attention. Whilst much of the discussion below relates to mainstream schools, it identifies riders, which apply more generally, and qualify the confidence with which research can be interpreted.

Booth (1996) makes the point that *"exclusion"* is the converse of *"inclusion"*. He draws attention to it being one of many options schools have for the disposal of pupils. Other means of achieving this include unofficial exclusion; discouraging pupils from attending; encouraging transfer to an alternative school and securing transfer to a *"more specialist"* provision.

There is a considerable evidence for the practice of informal exclusions (SHA, 1992). Stirling (1992a) noted that only two of thirty-two exclusions from children's homes were officially recorded; yet many of these pupils did not return to school or subsequently attended only on a part time basis. In some cases parents, by agreeing to withdraw their child and place him/her elsewhere, could avoided the stigma of an *"official"* exclusion (ACE, 1992a). An advantage of this approach is that these arrangements do not have to be reported and until recently schools have been able to retain funding for the placement. The disadvantage is that the situation can continue indefinitely, without any alternative education being provided for the child. Moreover parents are disenfranchised from any right of appeal. Under some conditions parental choice can become a thin facade for school choice, in that Headteachers may apply pressure to prompt parents to apply their right to the choice of an alternative school (DfE, 1994d; Cullingford and Morrison, 1996). As these transactions go unreported the prevalence remains difficult to quantify. Bourne *et al.* (1994) suggest that the official figures depict a conservative picture of the actual numbers and estimate that the inclusion of informal exclusions could boost the official statistics by as much as twenty fold. Despite this practice having been well documented, it would appear to remain in common usage. A report into exclusion from secondary schools (OfSTED, 1996) reported that the practice seemed to be increasing and this was endorsed in a recent study for the DfEE (Osler et al., 2001). Reducing exclusions from schools is now a government priority (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998). Far from marking a decline in informal exclusions, some schools appear to use this mechanism in order to

achieve targets designed to reduce exclusions. In some cases LEA officers are fully aware of this "*unofficial*" and "*unrecorded*" practice (Osler et al., 2001).

The distinction between exclusion and Statementing is blurred. Booth (1996) suggests that the distinction is underpinned by the notion that there are "*normal*" and "*abnormal*" pupils. This reflects mixed messages from the DfEE about whether children exhibiting behavioural difficulties are disruptive or disturbed. Exclusion is linked to the notion of "*normal*" children who are choosing to misbehave. This in turn implies that PRUs are perceived to be more about social control than serving the needs of children (Tomlinson, 1982). From this standpoint, pupils are perceived as culprits rather than victims, and the action taken is not intended to be for their good but to protect the educational interest of others. DfE (1994d) and DfEE (1995b), continue to locate the problem explicitly with the child, despite the Elton report (DES, 1989) which highlighted the disaffection experienced by many pupils. Difficult behaviour is not seen as evidence of need, despite the Code of Practice (DfE 1994a), which states that children with emotional or behavioural difficulties have learning difficulties. Conversely there is an assumption that there are "*abnormal*" pupils who are dealt with by the "*benign*" process of statutory assessment and placement, a move to segregated special school provision being argued as in their best interest. The definition of emotional and behavioural difficulties however leaves much scope for interpretation: "*between behaviour which challenges teachers but is within normal, albeit unacceptable, bounds and that which is indicative of serious mental illness ..... persistent, if not necessarily permanent*" (DfE, 1994c, para. 1 & 2).

In reality ad hoc factors determine whether a pupil is excluded or sent to a special school, yet it is axiomatic that excluded children must have some level of emotional or behavioural difficulty.

Cullingford and Morrison (1996) further argue for a relationship between exclusion and truancy. Truancy implies a personal choice but peer group pressures can heavily influence such choices. Measor and Woods (1984) suggest that pupils who deviate from the norm are particularly susceptible to social ridicule. Children stigmatized in this way may develop a sense of alienation from school and subsequently opt to truant.

Brodie (2000), in looking at exclusion of children looked after by local authorities, also draws attention to the concept of "*exclusion by non-admission*". This arises where children arrive at a new residential placement and are refused admission to local schools. She suggests that such actions may be based either on information from their previous school or the stigma of being "*in care*". Whilst such difficulties are usually resolved, it often takes a protracted period of time to secure a school placement.

For the purposes of this study, unless stated otherwise, the term exclusion refers exclusively to permanent exclusion. The right of a Headteacher to prevent a child from attending in this way was introduced in the Education (No. 2) Act, 1986 and the procedures for this were clarified in circular 10/94 (DfE, 1994c). Permanent exclusion is made with the intention that the pupil will not return to that school. The procedures involve the Headteacher, governing body, parents, pupil, and LEA. Since 1996 schools have been required to record permanent exclusions in the annual census that is returned to the DfEE.

4 LITERATURE REVIEW.

As there is little research relating specifically to permanent exclusions from SLD schools, I initially focus on the literature relating to mainstream schools before reviewing the general literature relating to special schools.

EXCLUSION FROM MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

Reasons Given.

Systems are biased in favour of dominant groups (Marshall, 1996). Within our society there is an assumption that a child's relationship to adults should be one of subordination. This is echoed in the Education (No 2) Act, 1986, which requires Headteachers to instill "*a proper regard for authority in their pupils*". Consequently exclusion from mainstream schools is often linked to issues of disobedience (DfE, 1993a), with verbal abuse, insolence and failure to comply with school rules being the most common reasons (NUT, 1992; Imich, 1994 & Mitchell, 1996). The actual behaviours that lead to exclusion are diverse and in many instances appear trivial (Castle and Parsons, 1997). However this frequently represents "*the final straw*" in a deteriorating relationship between a pupil and authority figures within the school (Blythe and Milner, 1994 p.11).

Mitchell (1996) draws attention to the relationship between exclusion and the beliefs of senior staff within the school. Staff may regard exclusion, as a mechanism for protecting the educational needs of the majority, from the actions of the disruptive few. By way of illustration, Dean (1999) in reporting the NAS/UWT conference indicates that the view of many delegates to government targets for exclusions was simply that "*troublesome pupils are not the proper responsibility of teachers*" (p.7). The abolition of "*indefinite*" exclusions in September 1994 was equally contentious and perceived by some Headteachers as a lack of government support for the difficulties experienced by schools (NAHT, 1994, p.2):

> *"Heads and their staff are heartily sick of being held responsible for the consequences of what is clearly a breakdown of discipline in society. The government must change its policy or be found guilty of abandoning its responsibility to give schools full support in maintaining order and discipline"*

In the National Exclusions Reporting System (NERS) data (DfE, 1993a) physical aggression is cited in 27% of cases and this was primarily exhibited between pupils. In only 7% of cases was staff the target of this aggression. The infrequency of violence directed (by pupils) towards teachers was also cited in the Elton report (DES, 1989), which quotes only 1.7% of teachers as reporting such attacks.

Blythe and Milner (1993) raise concerns about the accuracy of the documentary evidence used in some studies of exclusion. Records essentially document the official justification for exclusion, they may be coded to fit required criteria and are written knowing they may need to be defended in an appeal (McManus, 1995). Mitchell (1996, p.120) further suggests that the decision to exclude may actually precede the incident in question, with schools: *"carefully collecting the evidence which the LEAs, with half an eye on potential appeals by parents, are rightly keen to have documented"*

Whilst the inherent bias in such records casts doubt on what actually happened, there is a consistency in the argument that exclusion is being used as a response to perceived challenges to the authority of staff.

Whilst the number of incidents of physical violence directed towards staff appears low (Imich, 1994; Ofsted, 1996) this needs to be regarded with some caution. The number of incidents could be under-represented for many reasons, including the embarrassment of staff and the pressure on schools to present a

positive public image. With this perspective in mind it is interesting to note that it has been reported that as many as 1 in 7 teachers may have been assaulted by pupils at some point in their career (Luton cited in Castle and Parsons, 1997, p.5)

Increasing Trend Towards Exclusion

Research on exclusions prior to the 1990's is sparse. The introduction to Galloway (1982) makes specific reference to this lack of data. This study however, cites a study of Edinburgh schools in 1967-9[5] as indicating that exclusion was rare and applied to only 0.023% of the school population. The low level of exclusion prior to 1990 is also supported by ACE (1992a) who suggest that permanent exclusion was unheard of, indefinite exclusion was rare and fixed-term exclusion tended to be the last disciplinary resort. Data from this period, however, needs to be viewed in their historical context and with regard to the changes that have occurred within the education system. The amount of research on exclusion has grown significantly during the course of the 1990's and the importance of exclusion as a policy issue has been emphasized by studies reporting the dramatic rise in numbers and the relationship between school exclusion and social exclusion.

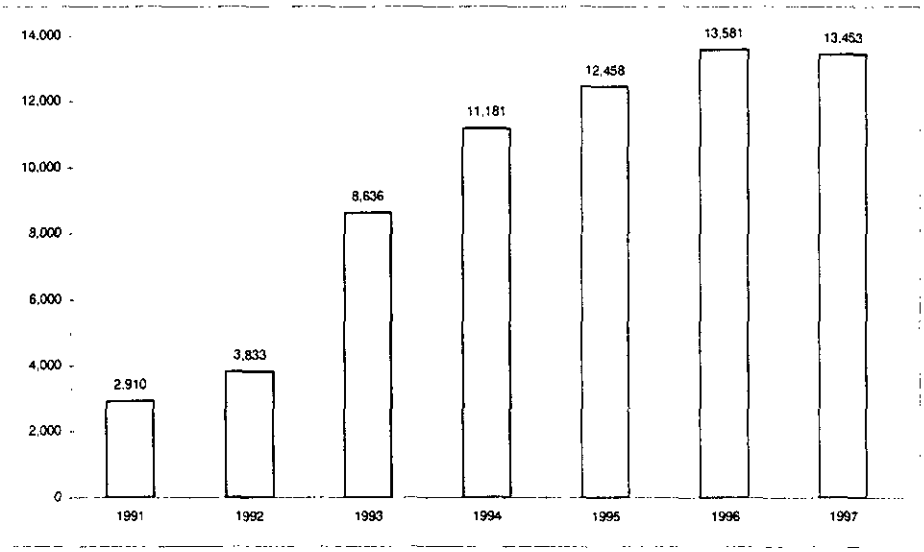
The DfE (1992b, 1993a) report a 32% increase in permanent exclusions between 1990/1 and 1991/2. This trend is also supported by Imich's (1994) longitudinal study within one LEA, which indicated a 50% increase in the three years prior to 1992. Parsons et al. (1995) also note a further increase to an estimated 11,181 in 1993/4 and 12,458 in 1994/5. A longitudinal study between 1993-7 (Godfrey and Parsons, 1998) further supports this trend. This study was particularly significant because of the high response rates of LEAs (95.5%).

Data on other types of exclusions are more difficult to determine. The SHA (1992) survey noted that 2.4% of pupils had experienced some form of

[5] York et al (1972)

exclusion and suggested the ratio of temporary: indefinite: permanent exclusions were approximately 37:4:4. Imich's (1994) study (relating to a school population of approximately 225,000) found that between 1989/90 & 1991/2, fixed term exclusions had increased from 900 to 1,700; indefinite exclusions had increased from 70 to 210 and permanent exclusions had increased from 56 to113.

Figure 4.1. Graph of the number of permanent exclusions from all schools in England 1991-7 (*based on Godfrey and Parsons, 1998*).

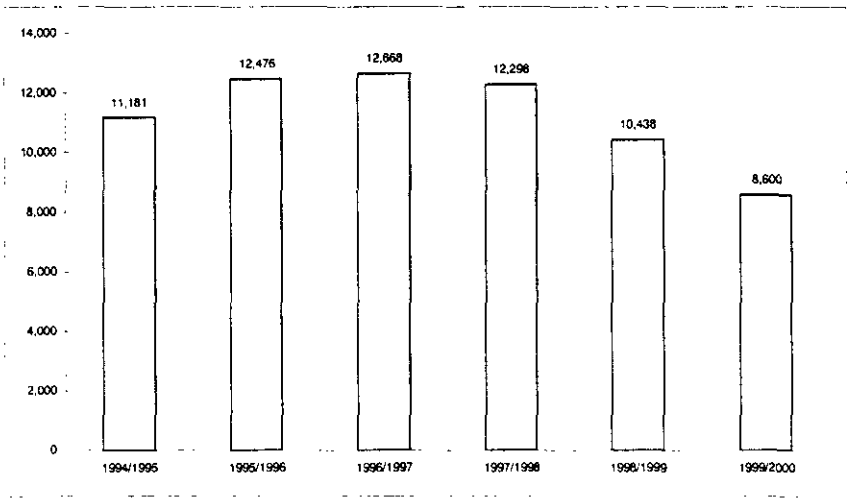


Note: The figures have been prorated where there were gaps in the data (e.g. some LEAs did not respond and only 40 were sampled in 1994/5).

During the course of this study, data has become more readily available through the publication of government statistics (DfEE, 2000a). The DfEE cast doubt on the reliability of all data collected before 1995/6, prior to the systematic collection of data through the annual school census. The DfEE figures are at variance with those reported by Godfrey and Parsons (1998), although a direct comparison is made more complex by differences in the way they are reported. A key difference is whether data are reported with reference to academic or calendar year. Setting aside arguments about the relative accuracy of data, evidence of the trend described above is equally apparent in the DfEE reports. Moreover the DfEE data provides evidence about more recent developments.

These data suggest that the number of exclusions appeared to plateau around 1995/7, and decreased systematically from this point. Provisional estimates for 1999/2000 (DfEE, 2001) suggest a further decline to just 8,600. This would represent over a 30% decrease on the 1996/7 figures. Much of this change has been attributed to changes in government policy (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998), which has placed pressure on schools and governing bodies to retain pupils on roll. Headteacher unions however perceive the 1999/2000 data to be "*artificially low*" and at a level that may prove difficult to sustain (Thornton, 2001).

Figure 4.2. Graph of the number of permanent exclusions reported to the DfEE between 1994/1995 & 1999/2000 (DfEE, 2000a & 2001).

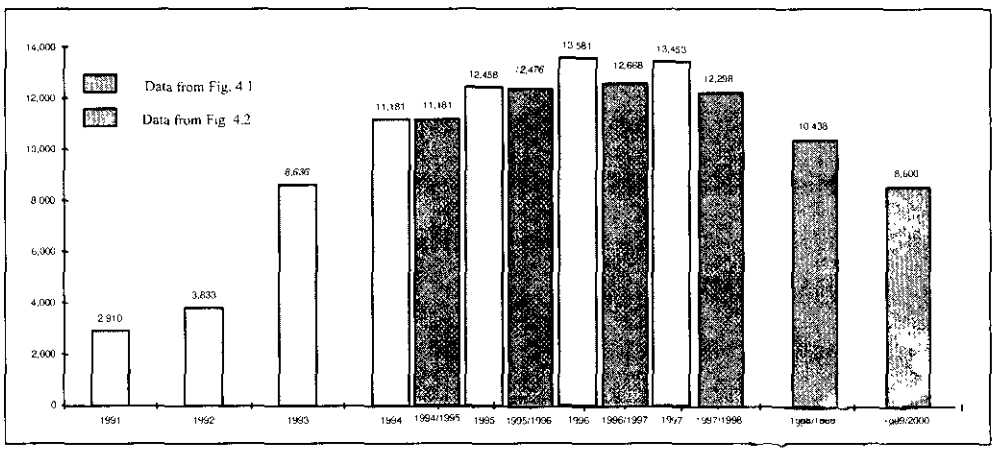


Note: The data for 1999/2000 is provisional.

Reverting to the point that permanent exclusions represent only one disposal option (Booth, 1996), changes in legislation may merely cause schools to utilize other channels to remove unwanted pupils. The abolition of indefinite exclusions is a case in point. The NAHT (1994) claimed that this left schools with no alternative but to make permanent exclusions and quoted the rise in permanent exclusions during that Autumn Term 1994 as evidence of this

(although their political investment in this interpretation needs to be acknowledged).

Figure 4.3. Graph illustrating the relationship between Fig. 4.1 (Godfrey and Parsons, 1998) & Fig. 4.2 (DfEE, 2000a & 2001).



The accuracy of many of these studies warrants qualification. Figures in some reports (e.g. NUT, 1992) are misleading as they combine different categories of exclusion without making this explicit. Hayden et al. (1996) also indicate that indefinite exclusions often become permanent, without this being re-categorized in the official data. Similarly Preston's (1994a) data, which was based on OfSTED reports, may have been skewed by OfSTED deliberately targeting schools presenting concern in their first round of inspections. A further factor is the low rate of return many surveys have received (e.g. Hayden et al., 1996 report a response rate of only 39%). Equally government data are not exempt from criticism. Early DfE/DfEE reports (particularly the NERS reports) merely collate information returned to them by LEAs. Yet it is acknowledged that there may have been inaccuracies in schools reports to LEAs and the LEA's recording has frequently been judged inadequate (e.g. NUT, 1992). Stirling (1992a) further suggests that some LEAs may have wished to avoid being seen as high excluding authorities by deliberately under reporting to the DfEE. It is consequently possible that a proportion of the apparent increase in exclusions

may merely be a function of improvements in recording methods, although it is difficult to determine the size of this possible effect. The NERS reports were never released in full, partly because of concerns about their accuracy. Thus it needs to be acknowledged that the discussion paper (DfE, 1992b) based on the NERS figures for 1990/91 and used as the principal baseline for subsequent studies may have significantly underestimated the actual level of exclusions. Despite these reservations, the consistency of such findings (also Preston, 1994a; Abrahams and Ashton, 1995 and Robinson, 1998) and magnitude of the increase in exclusions is so significant that it leaves little doubt as to the validity of there having been a dramatic rise in exclusions particularly between 1992-4.

Hypotheses For This Trend.

Much of the explanatory research has focused on changes introduced by the Education Reform Act, 1988 and the Education Act, 1993.

Hypothesis 1 - FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Formula funding heightens the profile of children most demanding of school resources. Children presenting behaviour difficulties are the group least likely to receive sympathetic consideration when competing with other educational priorities (Moore et al., 1993; Audit Commission, 1994) and there is a financial incentive for schools to jettison troublesome pupils rather than provide resources to meet their needs (SHA, 1992; Imich, 1994):

> "*with increasing pressures on decreasing resources, schools may find it more expedient to regard a child as naughty rather than needy*" (ACE, 1992b, p.5).

The NUT (1992) survey found that 27% of responses cited the lack of resources provided under LMS as being responsible for increases in exclusions. In addition, embedded within the concept of LMS, is a shift

in the balance of power from LEA's to schools. Maintaining centralised services to support schools has become increasingly problematic with the drive to delegate budgets (NUT, 1992; SHA, 1992). Schools are unlikely to purchase advice on this group of children (Stirling, 1991) particularly as it may commit them to further expenditure when implementing such advice.

As discussed earlier, the relationship between exclusion and Statementing is tenuous. Exclusion provides a means by which schools can exert pressure on LEAs to provide additional resources or to speed up the formal assessment procedures (Searle, 1994). Whilst advising against the use of exclusion in this way, Circular 9/94 (DfE, 1994c) can be viewed as colluding with the process by urging LEAs to consider initiating the statutory assessment procedure on excluded pupils, "*as a matter of urgency*". This advice has also been difficult to reconcile with the drive to reduce the proportion of Statemented pupils. Many LEAs have reduced the pressure on Statementing by funding schools through audit arrangements. However this policy has heightened concerns that the level of support provided under this mechanism may be inadequate and that a Statement may be more difficult to secure.

Hypothesis 2 - "LEAGUE TABLES" AND PUBLIC PROFILE.

The market system creates competition between schools and difficult pupils may be viewed as a liability (Stirling, 1992b). The influence of parents has also increased with their right to express a school preference. This has lead to some Headteachers being lobbied by parents, threatening to remove their children unless disruptive pupils are excluded (Blyth and Milner, 1996). Within the market economy, schools may also wish to avoid the public image associated with high rates of unauthorized absences. Whilst there is official disapproval of the use of this mechanism as a sanction against truancy (DfE, 1994d), the policy of

publishing attendance data provides a positive incentive to exclude for non-attendance (Stirling, 1992a; Blythe and Milner, 1993). The publication of standard attainment tests places similar pressure on schools to give priority to the academic needs of the majority (NUT, 1992) and opens the possibility that exclusion may be used to rid schools of pupils who threaten the school's performance and public reputation (Jones and Bilton, 1994). There is also a view that unless schools are seen to take strong action against behavioural difficulties the disciplinary ethos of the school will deteriorate and the education of others will suffer. OfSTED (1993b) found evidence for the use of exclusion to raise the public profile of the school and the SHA (1992) acknowledge that a school's commitment to standards of behaviour can be flagged via exclusion. Within a competitive market the factual basis for belief is less important than public perception and it is on reputation and image that parents will judge schools (Stirling, 1992a).

Hypothesis 3 - LOSS OF CURRICULUM CONTROL & TEACHER STRESS.

There are concerns that the National Curriculum is not relevant to some children and could exacerbate the difficulties of providing a more appropriate education (Bate and Moss, 1997). There may also be indirect implications. There are concerns about the increased workload on teachers (NUT, 1992). The political thrust of the National Curriculum also gives credence to the view that teachers cannot be trusted to teach effectively unless curriculum content is prescribed. Challenging behaviour poses a further threat to teachers' professional self-confidence and morale (Gray et al., 1994). A number of studies associate the rise in exclusions with a hardening of attitudes (in teachers) towards behavioural problems. This is associated with reduced levels of tolerance and sympathy to the problems faced by children exhibiting behaviour difficulties (OfSTED, 1993b; AMA, 1995).

> Linkage has been made to the government's "*back to basics*" policy, which advocated a "*need to understand less and condemn more*" (Major, 1993). Some school's, supportive of inclusion, have also come under pressure to exclude, from teacher unions, instructing members to refuse to teach specific children. Searle (1996) viewed this as an attempt by unions to usurp the power of Headteachers and "*force school management and governing bodies to make exclusion at the demand of teachers*" (p.46).

The status of these hypotheses needs to be viewed critically. Many are based on a logical analysis of anomalies within the current system, caused by the introduction of market dynamics. If a professed aim is to reduce exclusions it obviously makes little sense to have positive disincentives for schools to maintain some pupils on role. That this is logical, however, does not establish a causal connection.

Much of this research comes from surveys collating the views of Headteachers. A key issue is not whether financial concerns or league table could provide an incentive to exclude but whether they actually have an impact on such decisions. Some of these hypotheses imply that exclusion is based merely on a cold analysis of cost benefits, yet the reality within schools is more complex. The SHA (1992) draws legitimate attention to the "*patient effort, counselling, and attempts to resolve behavioural ...problems*" (p. 2) that often precedes exclusion. The relationship between exclusion and Statementing (OfSTED, 1993b; Cohen and Hughes, 1994 & Searle, 1994) is more consistent with such child-centred sentiments. Stirling (1993) noted that prior to exclusion most schools had explored the possibility of Statementing. However the procedures were often perceived to be too slow and inflexible, leaving the school to manage a deteriorating situation with uncertainty about the possibility of enhanced resourcing or a change of placement in the future. Hayden et al.

(1996) similarly noted that many formal assessments are often overtaken by exclusion.

Groups At Risk

The data suggests that certain groups of children are more at risk of permanent exclusion than the general population:

1. **Secondary aged pupils.** The NERS data (DfE, 1992b) indicated that Secondary aged pupils are more vulnerable and constitute approximately 85% of all excluded pupils (also DfEE, 1998a, DfEE, 1999a). Godfrey and Parsons' (1998) longitudinal study further indicates that exclusion tends to be focused around pupils in the last 3 years of Secondary schooling with a peak in Year 10 (constituting 81% of all exclusions from secondary schools). In 1997/8 (DfEE, 1999a) 58% of secondary schools excluded at least one pupil as compared with 6% of Primary schools. Of these 27% of pupils were aged 14 years (0.61% of pupils in this age group)[6]. It consequently follows that most excluded pupils will have already commenced the programmes of study for their GCSE courses. Even if an alternative placement is available, their ability to pursue course options may not prove possible (Osler et al., 2001).

   As in much of the research on exclusion, the descriptive data appears reliable, although minor discrepancies are evident between studies depending on methodology and population variables. For example, the evidence that exclusion tends to relate to the last 3 years of Secondary schooling is widely supported although the modal age moves within this range (DfE, 1992b cite 15 years of age; DfEE, 1998a cite 14 years of age).

[6] A similar profile is also evident in DfEE, 2000a

2. **Boys.** Boys are more likely to be excluded than girls. The DfEE (1999a) indicated that 0.16% of pupils are excluded. This represents 0.26% of males and 0.05% of females. A gender ratio (male:female) in Secondary schools of approximately 4:1 for is widely reported (DfE, 1992b; DfE, 1993a; Imich, 1994; Mitchell, 1996; Imich, 1996; Castle and Parsons, 1997; Godfrey and Parsons, 1998; DfEE, 1998a; DfEE, 1999a; DfEE, 2000a). Parsons et al. (1995) also highlighted that this gender ratio is greater in Primary schools. Longitudinal studies (Castle and Parsons, 1997; Godfrey and Parsons, 1998) suggest a ratio of around 14:1.

   There is convincing evidence that boys are more likely to be excluded and this gender difference is more significant in Primary schools. However the size of the ratio differs widely, with estimates for Primary pupils ranging from 9:1 (Hayden et al., 1996) to 21:1 (Parsons et al., 1995).

3. **Afro-Caribbean boys.** Distribution by ethnicity is difficult to determine, as such data has not always recorded by LEAs. This was initially noted in the NUT (1992) study. The Macpherson report (1999) into the death of Stephen Lawrence also resurrected this concern and proposed that schools publish annually exclusion data broken down by ethnicity. The Commission for Racial Equality further supported this position.

   Despite this inadequacy of data collection, the NERS data (DfE, 1992b; DfE, 1993a) suggested Afro-Caribbean boys (who constituted approximately 2% of the total school population) are represented in approximately 8.5% of exclusions. DfEE (2000a) however indicates that whilst the proportion remains high it appears to be falling. The percentage is reported to have dropped from 7.1% in 1995/6 to 5.7% in 1998/9. The over-representation of Afro-Caribbean boys is also supported in Robinson's (1998) study of Bristol primary schools. It is estimated that 0.76% of black Afro-Caribbean pupils are excluded, compared with 0.17% of white pupils

(DfEE, 1999a). OfSTED (1993b) drew attention to this ratio being much greater in some LEAs. DfEE (1999a) for instance, quotes the London Borough of Richmond as excluding 3.75% of black Caribbean pupils in 1997/8. Rafferty and Thornton (1999) reporting in the TES note that Afro-Caribbean boys are 15 times more likely to be excluded than their white classmates in some LEAs and that the government are requiring these LEAs to address this problem within their behaviour support plans.

Bourne et al. (1994) viewed this ethnic distribution to be an extension of wider debates about institutional racism. A number of studies (Mac an Ghail, 1988; Smith and Tomlinson, 1989) indicate that pupils' perceive teachers to be more ready to identify behaviour problems amongst Afro-Caribbean pupils compared with white or Asian pupils. Thus the stereotypical image of the non-compliant Afro-Caribbean and compliant Asian is suggested as an explanation (Blythe and Milner, 1994). Irrespective of the dynamics of this process, Osler et al. (2001) raise concerns about the quality of pastoral support Afro-Caribbean pupils may be experiencing. Whilst the high level of exclusion has raised the profile of this issue there may be many other Afro-Caribbean pupils who are alienated by the way the school system responds to their needs.

Whilst supporting the over-representation of Afro-Caribbean boys, Kinder (2000) further indicated that the exclusion rates for Bangladeshi boys has increased recently. This research also raised concerns about the inadequacy of the data to identify other groups (e.g. Croatians) who may be over-represented in exclusion figures.

Data indicating the over-representation of Afro-Caribbean boys is convincing, although it needs to be acknowledged that LEAs have been poor at monitoring such data. The fall in overall exclusion, evidenced in the 1997/8 data (DfEE, 1999a) also suggested that this has not affected all

ethnic groupings in the same way. The proportion of Black Caribbean pupils has increased when compared with the previous year. Quoting this as evidence of institutional racism, however, is more contentious and has attracted criticism. An inherent problem is the difficulty in establishing an operational definition of "institutional racism". A response to non-compliance over the rules of conduct could be viewed as racism if it relates to a black pupil (cited in Bourne et al., 1994) but not if a white pupil was dealt with in an identical manner. Whilst accepting that institutional racism may well exist in schools, such arguments warrant critical consideration. Blyth and Milner (1996) also draw attention to the problem of disentangling the overlapping effects of disadvantage. Parsons and Howlett (1995b) for instance, criticizes the Bourne et al. (1994) study for not controlling adequately for the effects of social class. They cite the strong correlation between socio-economic class and behaviour as providing an alternative explanation for many of their findings.

4. **Children in care.** That children in local authority care are significantly over-represented in exclusion data is well supported in the literature (Stirling, 1992b; Parsons et al., 1994a; SSI/OfSTED, 1995 & Ofsted, 1996). Even Galloway's study of Sheffield in 1982 noted that Social Services were involved with 49% of the children prior to exclusion. Children in care represented a small proportion of the secondary school population (approximately 0.3%), yet a significant proportion (approximately 23%) of the pupils excluded. Almost identical figures are reported in more recent research (Robinson, 1998). Stirling (1992b) further suggests that exclusion is likely to precipitate Social Service involvement and could increase the probability of the child coming into local authority care.

   A related issue for "*looked after children*" is the instability of care placements. Stein and Carey (1986) suggest that on leaving care 40% of children had experienced five or more placements. Firth (1995) also found a

strong correlation between the number of placements and exclusion (although even where there had been stability of placement 20% were still excluded). Instability of care placements also has implications for continuity in their education (SSI/OfSTED 1995). Moreover many children in care are felt to underestimate their educational potential and this is exacerbated by a disparity in the attention given by placements to education, as opposed to social development. Links between school and care placements can also be poor (SSI/OfSTED, 1995).

Gold (1999) quotes the Social Exclusion Unit as indicating that children in care are 10-80 times more likely to be excluded. Why this is the case remains contentious. Whilst Firth (1995) found a strong correlation between the number of placements and exclusions, this does not establish causality. It merely suggests the two factors co-vary. Whilst the instability of placement may disrupt educational attachment, it could equally be that those children exhibiting the most challenging behaviour are both more likely to be excluded and to cause domestic placements to breakdown. That professional care settings give insufficient emphasis to the importance of education may present a valid observation but this has not been shown to be directly linked to exclusion.

5. **Children with learning difficulties**. Pupils with learning difficulties (poor acquisition of basic skills - particularly literacy) are one of the groups most at risk of exclusion. Galloway (1982) noted that 76% of permanently excluded pupils had reading levels that would cause them difficulty in coping with the curriculum. Support for their learning difficulties was not always provided, yet failure to cope with the curriculum was not acknowledged to be a relevant consideration. More recently, Bracher et al. (1998) noted that in 50% of exclusions, schools had failed to produce IEPs that would address the learning difficulties of these pupils. An anomaly in the data, relating to Afro-Caribbean pupils, is that whilst they may be

attaining below their potential they are likely to be of at least average ability (OfSTED, 1996)

The AMA (1995) note the difficulty LEAs have, under the LMS, in protecting resources provided for pupils with SENs. This position is also supported by the Audit Commission (1994) who felt the concepts of integration, market ideology and pressures to delegate resources do not sit easily with each other.

ACE (1992b) also reported that the highest proportion of calls relating to exclusion were about Statemented pupils. Hayden et al. (1996) study of primary schools suggest that 15% of children were Statemented at the point of exclusion and a further 15% were in the process of being Statemented. Pupils with Statements currently represent 18% (DfEE, 1999a) of excluded pupils but a relatively small percentage of the overall school population (i.e. 0.96% of Statemented pupils are excluded compared with 0.16% of the general population). These findings highlight the tensions around the duty to provide appropriately for pupils with SENs and exclusion. The 1998/9 figures (DfEE, 2000a) indicate children with Statements are 7.4 times as likely to be excluded.

Whilst the point that LEAs have less ability to protect resources directed to pupils with SENs under LMS (AMA, 1995 & Audit Commission, 1994) is factually accurate, it does not establish that schools are making inadequate provision for these children. The key factors identified by OfSTED (1996) included poor basic skills, together with limited aspirations and opportunities, poor peer relationships and peer pressure likely to exacerbate conflict with authority. This highlights the overlap of aspiration and relationship factors, commonly associated with low attainment, and confuses the issue of which are linked to exclusion. Research linking exclusion and Statements are particularly difficult to interpret as they imply

that this represents a homogenous group of pupils. Some studies (e.g.. Hayden et al., 1996) moreover infer that this criteria holds significance in distinguishing between children exhibiting behavioural problems. This takes us back to earlier debates about "*normal*" and "*abnormal*" pupils. I would suggest that pupils who are Statemented as "*having EBD*" have not been shown to differ fundamentally, if at all, from other children presenting behavioural difficulties but who are neither Statemented nor are considered to have SENs.

Differences Between & Within LEAs

The differences in exclusion rates between schools and LEAs are also significant (Parsons and Howlett, 1996; Godfrey and Parsons, 1998 & DfEE, 1998b). Parsons et al. (1995) found that the rate of exclusion in some LEAs was 10 times higher than that in others. Variation between LEAs in 1996/7 ranged from 0.01-0.12% for Primary aged pupils and 0.10-0.90% for Secondary aged pupils (DfEE, 1998a). Similar differences can exist between schools within the same LEA (McManus, 1987; DfE, 1992b; SHA, 1992 & Imich, 1994). Galloway (1982) found that 5 of the 39 schools in Sheffield were responsible for 53% of exclusions. More recently DfEE (1998b), indicated that 4% of Secondary schools were responsible for 15% of the national exclusion figures in 1996/7.

The SHA (1992) attempted to explain these differences as reflecting differences in catchment area, but there is little support for this argument. Godfrey and Parsons (1998) noted that LEAs in Inner London had some of the highest exclusion rates but these differences were poorly correlated with indices of disadvantage. McManus (1987) also found that two schools with comparable catchment areas, similar proportions of pupils with reading difficulties and similar attendance problems, had suspension rates differing by a multiple of 18. Such findings prompt a shift in attention from within-child factors, to the attitudes, policies and practices of schools. McManus (1995) suggests that the

differences in school policies could account for half the difference between high and low excluding schools. A number of studies have attempted to isolate these factors. McManus (1987) identified the following points:

- The more swiftly an issue comes to the attention of authority figures in the school the more likely it is to lead to exclusion. He summarized this as *"high bureaucratic involvement in pastoral care and discipline"* (p.270). Holland and Hamilton (1994) also endorse this and note that verbal abuse directed at a member of the senior management team would normally be sufficient to result in an exclusion of some type.
- The better the provision made by schools for SENs the lower the exclusion rate.
- Where the school specified the number of offenses that would trigger exclusion, there was a higher rate of exclusion (also cited by OfSTED, 1993b).
- Exclusions are reduced where staff at all levels of the hierarchy take responsibility for discipline. Similarly McLean (1987) found that in low excluding schools referrals to senior staff that merely passed on the problem were discouraged, whilst those that request practical advice were encouraged.

EXCLUSION FROM SPECIAL SCHOOLS

The total number of permanent exclusions from special schools, as a generic group, appears small and represented 4-5% of all the permanent exclusions made in England between the academic years 1995/6-1999/2000 (DfEE, 2001). Those pupils excluded from special schools also constitute approximately 0.55% (mean score for the years quoted) of the special school population.

Figure 4.4: Table of permanent exclusions from special schools as a percentage of the special school population (DfEE, 2001)

1995/1996	1996/1997	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000
0.54	0.64	0.58	0.45	0.41*

* The 1999/2000 data is a provisional.

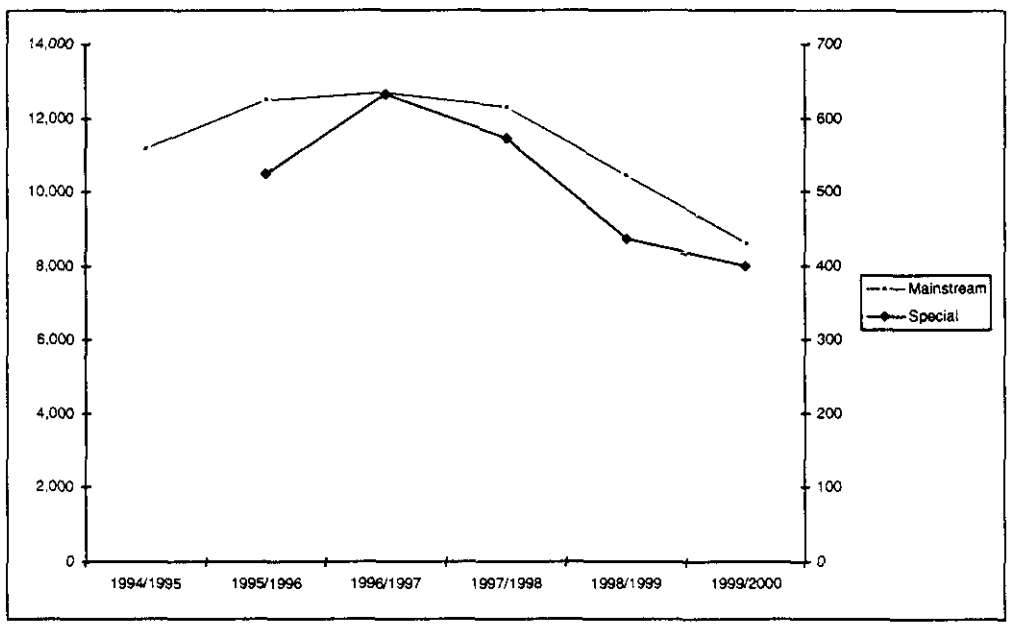
The majority of excluded special school pupils were of Secondary school age and a male:female ratio of 8:1 was observed (Godfrey and Parsons, 1998). This falls mid-way between the figures for Secondary and Primary and may reflect little more than the age range involved (i.e. most SLD schools cater for pupils from 3-19 years of age).

Like mainstream schools there is evidence of an increase in exclusions during the 1990's. Imich (1994) reported a small increase during 1989-92. This is further supported by Parsons et al. (1995) who found a further rise from 4.1-6.1% of all exclusions between 1993-4. The longitudinal study (Godfrey and Parsons, 1998) also indicated that the exclusion rate had continued to rise and DfEE (1998a) indicate a 20% increase in exclusions over the past two years. In 1997/8 (DfEE, 1999a) 18% of special schools had excluded at least one pupil. In terms of actual numbers 168 special schools excluded 1-2 pupils and 3 special schools excluded 9-10 pupils (these figures including both maintained and non-maintained special schools). Moreover this increase in the actual number of exclusions was against a decline in the total number of pupils

attending special schools (DfE, 2000a). The percentage of pupils attending special schools fell from 1.3%, of the total pupil population, in 1993 to 1.2% in 1998 (DfEE, 1998c).

More recently the number of special school exclusions appear to be moderating with a lower figure being reported in 1998/9 (DfEE, 2000a). The manner in which special school exclusions have mirrored the pattern in mainstream schools is intriguing and probably best illustrated by use of a comparison graph of the DfEE, 2001 data.

Figure 4.5. Graph comparing the total number of exclusions from mainstream and special school between the academic years 1994/1995-1999/2000 (DfEE, 2001)



Note:

1. The mainstream data relates to the left axis and the special school exclusions to the right axis.
2. The data for 1999/2000 was provisional.

The differences in exclusion rates between LEAs appears to be more extreme in respect to special schools, DfEE (1999a) reported a variation between 0.00-3.08% of the special school population. Similar to earlier arguments this difference was not felt to be adequately explained by reference to socio-

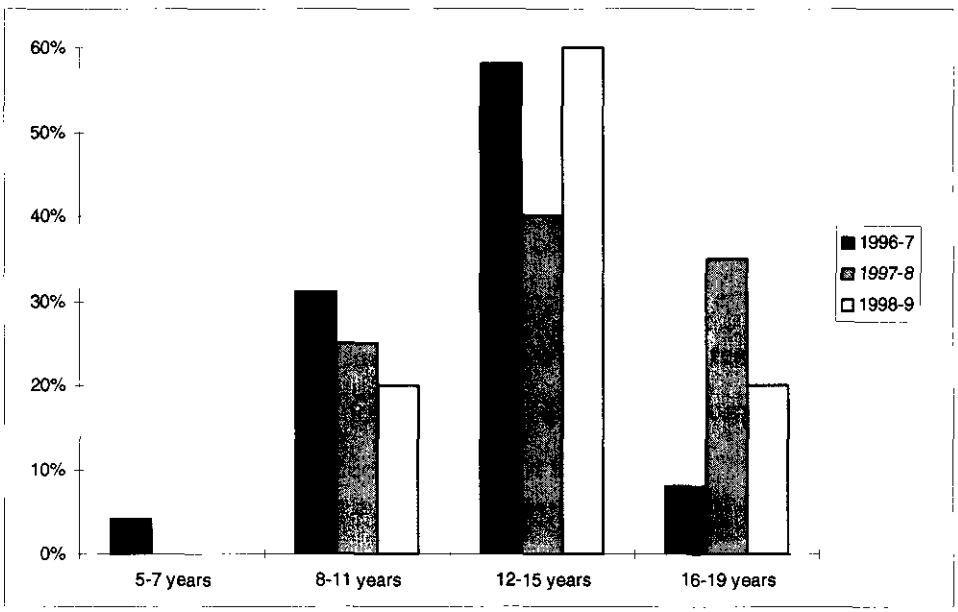
economic difference. It may, however, be a function of differences in the systems LEAs have for meeting special educational needs (SENs). The Audit Commission (1998a) drew attention to the lack of consistency between LEAs in their policies on issuing statements. Whether LEAs have special schools, or are attempting to meet the needs of such pupils in integrated provision is also likely to be critical, particularly in relation to EBD pupils. Hayden et al. (1996) suggests that low levels of exclusions in some LEAs could be a function of either the quality of support provided, or strong inclusion philosophies which exert pressure on schools not to exclude.

Male's (1996b) survey of seventy-five SLD schools (4,100 pupils) reported Headteachers as perceiving the numbers of pupils with challenging behaviour to be increasing. They also viewed exclusions to be increasing, and 25% reported having excluded a pupil over the past year (there was no attempt to validate these data). Permanent exclusion was reported to have been in response to violent behaviours, some causing severe injury to staff. Male also indicates that a significant number of the schools reported having replaced teachers and qualified nursery nurses with support assistants. An unrelated paper (Mittler, 1993) also raised concerns about the decline in specialist SLD teacher training courses.

An inherent weakness in the Male (1996b) study is its dependence on the perceptions of Headteachers. Gray et al. (1994) makes the point that staff in schools often hold romantic view of a prior "*golden age*" when behaviour problems of this type did not exist. However, this is not supported by historical evidence. The Hadow Report (Board of Education 1927), like the Elton Report (DES 1989), was initiated largely as a response to increasing concerns about the decline in standards of behaviour in schools. Humphries (1981) in his oral history of education in the 1920-30s also provides evidence of incidents comparable to some of the more significant difficulties teachers currently experience in schools.

After the start of this study OfSTED published a series of "*Performance, Assessment and National Contextual Data* (PANDA)" reports (OfSTED, 1999, 2000 & 2001). The OfSTED (1999) report, which is based on the DfEE's school census (Form 7) for the academic year 1996-7, report a 0.10% exclusion rate for SLD schools (i.e. 23-25 pupils), with two schools excluding two pupils. There was no gender difference in the exclusion pattern for this academic year. Over half the exclusion were in the 12-15 year age group (see table below for the more detailed distribution).

Figure 4.6. Graph illustrating the distribution of pupils permanently excluded from SLD schools, by age (OfSTED, 1999, 2000 & 2001).



Similarly OfSTED (2000 & 2001) reported 20 permanent exclusions from SLD schools in both the academic year 1997/8 & 1998/9. This represented 0.08% & 0.09% of the pupil population for these years. These data indicated a gender difference (male:female) in exclusion of approximately 3:1. The distributions for males were 0.11% & 0.10% and for females were 0.04% & 0.06% respectively. The age distributions were different but were still skewed towards the older age groups.

Figure 4.7. Table showing the percentage of pupils permanently excluded from SLD schools, by age (OfSTED, 1999, 2000 & 2001).

	AGE IN YEARS			
	5-7	8-11	12-15	16+
1996-7	4%	31%	58%	8%
1997-8	0	25%	40%	35%
1998-9	0	20%	60%	20%
Average	1.33%	25.33%	52.67%	21%

IMPLICATIONS

Booth's (1996) argument that exclusions represent only one of the possible disposal options used by schools, highlights that it cannot meaningfully be studied in isolation. As the LEA more directly regulates special schools, the main alternative to exclusion is placement in a more specialized provision, typically a residential special school. It is consequently important to look at the relationship between these factors. A complication however is that residential special school placements may be made for a variety of reasons (Abbott et al., 2000). One of these is the deterioration in domestic circumstances, irrespective of the school's ability to meet the needs of the pupil.

The exclusion rates for the primary, secondary and special school sectors are 0.031%, 0.35% and 0.46% respectively (Parsons et al., 1995a). This suggests that special schools are the highest excluding sector of education and raises important questions about the role and function of special schools. There is some evidence (Parsons et al., 1995a; Godfrey and Parsons, 1998) that special school exclusions have increased over recent years, but whether this has been the case for SLD schools is unclear. There is a perception amongst Headteachers that this is the case (Male 1996b) but the evidence to substantiate this is weak. Moreover the PANDA data (OfSTED, 1999, 2000 & 2001)

relating to 1996/7-1998/9 suggests that the exclusion patterns have been relatively stable

Establishing if there has been any change in the exclusion pattern is a basic issue, and would lead to further consideration and elaboration. The introduction of market forces and publication of performance tables has less obvious relevance in the more regulated special school system but other factors may generalise across settings. Using exclusion to access additional resources (Male, 1996a) and the linkage between exclusion and the Statementing procedure (Stirling, 1993; Searle, 1994) would seem relevant to both educational settings. The relevance of the National Curriculum to children presenting challenging behaviour has also been an issue in schools (Bate and Moss, 1997). Given the nature of the client group, changes of policy in other related departments (e.g. Health; Social Services) may equally have an impact. Given the lack of data on SLD school exclusions, the hypotheses ascribed to exclusions from mainstream school provide a starting point for this study.

5 COMBINING RESEARCH METHODS

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE APPROACHES.

The methods used to conduct educational research are diverse. They are underpinned by significant differences in disciplinary and theoretical commitments, as well as competing views on the appropriate relationship between theory and practice. A crude distinction is often drawn between quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Despite attempts to solicit an accommodation between these approaches, a debate over the relative merits of each is ongoing in academic communities and surfaces intermittently in journals. A recent example is to be found in "*The Psychologist*" (Stevenson and Cooper, 1997; Morgan, 1998). Morgan advocates that psychology needs to preserve its positivist traditions if it is to maintain credibility as a social science. Stevenson and Cooper question the philosophical basis upon which concepts such as objectivity are based. Beliefs about the superiority of each paradigm still engender strong allegiances. At issue is whether concepts such as qualitative and quantitative research are labels that help us to make sense of the diversity of approaches or represent incompatible paradigms.

Goodwin and Goodwin (1984) suggest that the tension between approaches focus on three main issues. Firstly quantitative methods are objective, controlled and obtrusive; qualitative methods are subjective naturalistic and unobtrusive. Secondly each derives from mutually exclusive paradigm perspectives. Quantitative research tending to fall within a logical, positivist paradigm: qualitative methods being associated with a relativist and phenomenological paradigm. Thirdly measurement-related validity and

reliability is perceived as less critical in qualitative research. Whilst this provides a useful framework many of these differences are interrelated.

In attempting to establish an *"empirical knowledge"* of education, early researchers adopt quantitative approaches associated with the natural sciences. Within this positivist paradigm the task is to discover the "*facts*" without letting personal judgements influence the process. An emphasis is consequently placed on freedom from bias. This is done in the belief that outcomes will then yield a more objective and accurate picture of the underlying truth. Approaches tend to take the form of carefully designed experiments (possibly in artificial settings) where the researcher can exercise control over extraneous variables. Data are collected using rigorous sampling techniques to ensure that results can be generalized, and involve standardized methods to facilitate replication. Data tend to be in numeric form which can be analyzed using statistical techniques, to determine the probability with which associations might be products of chance variation. The approach is based on the principle that co-variation may signify a causal relationships.

Qualitative approaches have emerged in more recent years. The focus here is directed at capturing the complexity of social life and gaining insight into people's perception of the world. Cultural meanings and processes are emphasized rather than variables and outcomes, and consequently research is often undertaken in natural settings, with the researcher attempting to be as unobtrusive as possible in order to reduce reactivity. Studies tend to be in-depth but are relatively small in scale. Data is un-coded at the point of collection and is often in the form of verbal descriptions, recorded in natural language. Instead of setting out to test a hypothesis, qualitative research may deliberately embark on studies with few preconceived assumptions. An underlying principle is that a frame of reference should not be imposed on the data but that hypothesis should be allowed to emerge from the data itself (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

At issue in the quantitative approach, is how readily phenomenon can be encapsulated, coded and measured. In reducing complex human behaviours to numbers, the essence of what is being studied can be lost. This has been portrayed as the pursuit of reliability at the expense of validity. Concepts such as social class and intellectual ability are widely documented, yet are difficult to operationalise in meaningful ways. Conversely whilst qualitative research can provide a rich description of social life, approaches have often been criticized for not giving adequate attention to defining the terminology used. These distinctions lead Halfpenny (1979) to characterize qualitative research as soft, subjective and speculative: whereas quantitative research is hard, objective and rigorous. In the debate within "*The Psychologist*" (referred to earlier) Morgan (1998) viewed the authority of research to be intrinsically associated with the technical discipline of "*objective*" science (positivism) and dismisses qualitative research as *"investigative journalism*". From this perspective Mehan's (1973) criticism of psychometric assessments as assuming a correspondence in interpretative frameworks (between researcher and subject) that is not consistent with experience, is dismissed as a technical flaw, which can be addressed through, improved pilot studies and refinements design.

In contrast, critics of the positivist paradigm have argued that Mehan (1973) has identified a fundamental limitation in the methodology itself. Nor can a positivist approach be a guarantee of impartiality and value free neutrality. The way data are collected and interpreted must be influenced by the researcher's expectations (Rosenthal, 1966; Latour and Woolgar, 1979; Reason and Rowan 1981). Eisner (1992), adopting a relativist perspective, criticizes the naive realism that underpins much quantitative research. He argues that the aim of the positivist paradigm has been to capture a true account independent of the observer. It is assumed that this can be achieved via a methodology which minimize subjective judgments. We cannot, however, be absolutely certain of anything, as no procedure is independent of subjectivity. All knowledge is consequently "*constructed*" by observers who are themselves a product of the

traditions and beliefs within which they operate. These presuppositions cannot be assessed, as those assessments would themselves be dependent upon other presuppositions. Perception must always be framework-dependent and knowledge is sound only to the extent that we share conceptual frameworks.

Educational research is fundamentally different to that in the natural sciences as the subject matter is often social interactions. Blumer (1967) argues that all social life is a process of interpretation and negotiation, which does not translate into simple cause and effect relationships. People's perspectives shape their actions and at best these are diverse. Anti-positivists would further argue that perspectives are never constant. Cognition actively involves the construction of phenomenon rather than just discovering them. From this perspective research does not provide an account of an independent reality but creates the world it describes (Parker, 1989). It is not just that we cannot be sure of the truth of our claims but that we have no grounds for believing that there are phenomena independent of our knowledge of them. This has major implications for the "*positivist*" claims to objectivity and for disputes about how research should be evaluated.

Differences in paradigm also translate into differences in approach. Quantitative designs tend to set out to test preconceived hypothesis. Researchers commonly know what they are looking for, how to look for it and what to expect. In contrast during qualitative research, outcomes are often uncertain and emerge from the data only after the research has been completed (Henwood and Pidgeon 1992; Lofland and Lofland, 1984). In countering Morgan's (1998) dismissal of qualitative research as investigative journalism, Cooper and Stevenson (1998) argue that whilst qualitative approaches may start with the same raw material as that found in journalism, discourse analysis and grounded theory allows the development of theory and provides an explanatory dimension to the analysis.

Quantitative and qualitative techniques provide a trade off between breadth and depth and between generalizability and understanding of the specific. By way of illustration, a quantitative survey may yield representative and generalizable outcomes. On the other hand, a qualitative study can provide in-depth information about the processes underpinning decision-making. Whilst this may be a rich picture (a *"snapshot frozen in time"* - Woods, 1988), it is often limited to one set of circumstances and provides depth at the expense of breadth.

The qualitative approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the context in which events occur, whereas quantitative researchers seek to control the context by random sampling. Whilst quantitative studies take care to control extraneous variable, qualitative studies have often been accused of being subjective, biased and lacking precision. Both the strength and weakness of qualitative research is associated with the reliance on the human instrument. Inherent in the process is human fallibility and the potential for bias (Miles and Huberman, 1994, 2nd edn).

From a quantitative perspective the following criticisms have been made of qualitative studies. Sample sizes are often too small to allow findings to be safely generalized. There is an over-reliance on accessible informants and events, which make studies unrepresentative. For instance, Ball (1984) admitted that his account was distorted, as he had paid insufficient attention to pastoral work or extra curricular activities within the school and observed only those lessons to which he could gain access. Selective perception can occur with novel or extreme occurrences becoming over-represented. Whilst many qualitative researchers believe that the study of deviant cases provides important insights; quantitative researchers tend to discard them. "*Immersion*" can lead to explanations being viewed solely in terms of the context being studied, with little awareness of the forces operating from outside the system. Holistic bias can occur whereby a plausible explanation is constructed by

placing reliance on data that appears to fit the picture, and by giving little credence to contradictory data.

Differences in methodology also extend to the way in which research should be evaluated. Quantitative researchers have argued that standards such as validity and reliability should be applied equally to qualitative work. In contrast qualitative researchers have argued that different standards must apply. Adopting a radical position, Smith and Heshusius (1986) argue that quantitative research is associated with a "*realist*" perspective and research can be judged by fidelity to design and integrity of the procedures adopted. In contrast qualitative methods are "*idealist*". They reject the possibility of representing reality and consequently it is impossible to judge between competing claims.

Building on these points, Smith and Heshusius (1986) further argue that the development of educational research can be conceived as the evolution of two competing paradigms. These paradigms (or epistemological positions) are fundamentally at odds with one another since they are based on conflicting assumptions about the nature of the phenomena studied and how they can be understood. On this basis they assert that the two approaches cannot logically be combined in a single study. Equally Guba (1985) argues that attempts to combine the two approaches fail to distinguish the fundamental difference between a method and a paradigm. Combining methods would present few difficulties but competing paradigms cannot be mixed in this way: "*one must pledge allegiances to one paradigm or the other*" (Guba, 1985, p.80). This epistemological difference presents a threat to a mixed-method approach.

SIMILARITIES.

In contrast, to the discussion above, Hammersley (1992) suggests that the very act of considering whether quantitative and qualitative methods can be combined, merely serves to legitimize the belief that there is a fundamental and

important dichotomy in the approaches. He contests that research can be reduced to two contrasting positions and this perspective merely serves to obscure the diversity of issues, ideas, strategies and techniques that exist.

Despite superficial difference both approaches utilize measurement. Qualitative researchers frequently make quantitative claims but the medium is verbal classifications (i.e. sometimes). Embedded within this distinction therefore are arguments about precision. It is naïve however to assume that numbers are the best means of achieving precision. Sometimes no more precision than "*often*" is legitimate, and it is misleading to imply a level of accuracy that does not exist through the use of numbers. There are some situations in which numbers may be more precise. The underlying choice is not between numbers and words but decisions about where to place the emphasis on the continuum from more to less precise data. The fundamental issue is knowing when it is advantageous to count and when it is difficult or even inappropriate to count (Gherardi and Turner discussed in Goodwin and Goodwin, 1996, p.160).

Goodwin and Goodwin (1984) drew attention to the distinction between studies involving controlled variables made under artificial settings and observations conducted in natural setting. In reality all research suffers difficulties relating to reactivity. Simply attempting to adopt a low profile within a natural setting does not neutralize this problem. Hargreaves (1967) for instances, was frequently mistaken for an inspector when conducting his research in a school setting and this must have influenced his relationship with staff. Again there is a pragmatic decision to be made between obtaining data efficiently and the degree to which reactivity is likely to compromise the validity of the results.

All research involves selection and interpretation; consequently some degree of researcher bias is inevitable. Quantitative methods attempt to manage this through the integrity of the research design. Whilst this issue is given most prominence within the positivist paradigm it does not imply that it is not a

relevant consideration in qualitative studies (Bird 1992). The ground for criticising the positive paradigm equally raises difficulties for qualitative researchers. Knowledge is only valuable if the data is as free from error as possible. Building upon this point, Bassey (1990) argues that all researchers have a duty to ensure their data is accurate and reliable. In qualitative studies this has been addressed by triangulation and respondent validation.

Irrespective of how we try to manage these issues it needs to be recognized that researchers must bring assumptions to the task of research and these will have some effect. A further response therefore is to actively acknowledge such limitations. For this reason Harré (1979) holds that the researcher's perspectives should not be concealed but made explicit (also advocated by Miles and Huberman, 1994, 2nd edn). It is then easier for the reader to assess and weigh how these factors may have influenced the outcome.

Quantitative researchers are increasingly aware that some of their data may not be accurate or valid. Participant recall of recent events can clearly be at fault. Mehan (1973) further argues that at some point there must be an assumption of correspondence in interpretative frameworks that may or may not be valid. Consequently in surveys, respondents may not comprehend the meaning of questions to which they are responding. It is increasingly recognized that all data collection operates within a cultural context and is consequently effected by the perceptions and beliefs of investigators and respondents.

A contrast is often made between the inductive and deductive approaches, yet some quantitative research is descriptive and some qualitative research adopt a deductive approach. In Bird's (1992) study it was the qualitative approach which was used to test a hypothesis about the factors that made for successful implementation (i.e. commitment from those involved, sufficient resources and good communications). This point has prompted a further distinction between **Q**ualitative and **q**ualitative research. **Q**ualitative work refers to methods that are

based on hypothesis testing, whereas qualitative work refers to open-ended data collection and the emergence of understanding via grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Despite the attempt to advance this distinction, it needs to be acknowledged that all research involves an interaction between deduction and induction. Even if not stated overtly, the research process involves the construction of hypotheses, and assessment and modification of these models.

Many are critical of the position taken by Smith and Heshusius (1986) in respect to the criteria upon which research should be assessed. Hammersley et al. (1994) advocate that the same standards should apply to both but they are principles of validity and relevance and not the quantitative standards. Both the position of positivism and constructivism are problematic. In pursuit of '*objectivity*' positivism adopts a narrow definition of research that distances the researcher from the research. Conversely implicit within constructivism is relativism (Eisner, 1992). From this perspective the definition of what constitutes '*knowledge*' is more fluid. It suggests that these positions are not dichotomous but lie within a continuum. All research will involve suppositions about "*how we know*" (epistemology) and "*what we can know*" (ontology). They suggest a post-positivism position that acknowledges that the '*world out there*' can only be known imperfectly because of the limitations of perception and cognition. This does not however imply that we need concede to the extreme relativistic position that all accounts of the world are equally good. Hammersley et al. (1994) argue that the concept of truth and objectivity is desirable. Equally the polarization of choice being between naive realism and idealism is false. Despite the notion of absolute validity not being achievable there are things whose truth we are fairly confident about (Philips, 1989). Given that there is no certain knowledge against which a researcher can validate their account, the only basis is plausibility and credibility. To some extent we share a common framework by living in a common society. If meaning was less stable one could not be sure of anything and this would present equal difficulties for advocates of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A starting point in this process is

an awareness of one's biases and assumptions rather than hiding behind a delusion of objectivity (Stevenson and Cooper, 1997).

The philosophical basis of each method is distinct, different and has merit. These differences however have tended to polarize debate. Hammersley (1992) holds that the conventional distinctions between qualitative and quantitative approaches represent an unhelpful over-simplification (also Bryman, 1988; Cook and Reichardt, 1979; Ragin, 1987). When differences are viewed critically there seems little to justify them being deemed incompatible. The challenge is to find a judicious balance. Quantitative research generates knowledge that is inclined towards outcomes, generalizations, predictions and causal explanations. Qualitative research generates knowledge that focuses on process, understanding and illumination. Both approaches are rigorous yet each will have a different application, at different times and for different purposes. Patton (1990) cautions that one limited research paradigm should not be permitted to replace another. The importance of having alternative paradigms is to sensitize researchers to their underlying prejudices and challenge the assumptions on which their work is based. He advocates pragmatism over allegiance to a single paradigm. Research is a practical activity, which is influenced by the purposes, the context and the audience. Much of the underlying diversity stems from the fact that studies are shaped by and for different purposes. Decisions about appropriateness of method are best based on purpose, rather than commitment to a methodological stance. All approaches are tools with associated cost-benefits. Being conscious of this should enable the bast mode of enquiry to be matched to the questions being addressed (Miles and Huberman, 1994, 2nd edn).

COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES

When it comes to the choice of research methods, a pragmatic approach has been gaining in support (National Science Foundation, 1997). Not only are the fundamental distinctions between quantitative and qualitative approaches

blurred but practitioners have also argued for integrating the two approaches (Burgess, 1983). When blended together within a mixed-method design the two approaches can be used to complement each other (Bryman, 1988; Miles and Huberman, 1994, 2nd edn).

Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) reviewed the use of mixed-method evaluations and provided the following rationale for combining approaches.

1. Triangulation, whereby methods are used independently to asses the same phenomenon. The convergence of results consequently provides mutual corroboration of the outcome.
2. A complimentary approach, whereby the results of one method are used to enhance or elaborate on the results another.
3. Development, whereby one method is used to identify issues to be explored further via the other approach.
4. Initiation, whereby inconsistencies or discrepancies in outcomes from each approach are used to reformulate ideas and understanding.
5. Expansion, whereby the combined methods are used to extend the scope and depth of enquiry. Commonly quantitative methods are used to research outcomes and qualitative procedures to assess implementation.

These distinctions hinge on a combination of factors. Firstly, the underlying reason for combining approaches (what advantages derive from doing so). Secondly design considerations (the way in which they are linked). Miles and Huberman (1994, 2nd edn) elaborate on this by posing the following questions:

- Are the methods of equal status in the design?
- Are the methods interactive, or does each component provide a separate data set?
- In what way are the two aspects sequenced?

The main reasons for linking methods are essentially to determine the degree of corroboration between findings (via triangulation) to enhance depth and scope of the study and to use contradictions to initiate new lines of enquiry. To this list Sieber (1973) identified the role of quantitative approaches in supporting qualitative studies. At the design phase, surveys for instance, can identify representative samples or deviant cases to be explored via interviews. At the data collection phase they can supply background information and avoid bias in sampling. At the analysis phase they can indicate the limits within which results can be safely generalized.

TRIANGULATION

Triangulation is a process designed to explore the reliability of findings and a distinction can be made between its applications "*within*" and "*between*" methods. Triangulation "*within a method*" involves capturing data from several viewpoints in order to explore the degree of internal consistency. Triangulation "*between methods*" involves collecting data on a common topic using different methods. One of the inherent advantages in using a mixed-method approach is that it produces independent data sets against which such comparisons can be made.

Cohen and Manion (1989, 2nd edn.) and Burgess (1984) argue that addressing a research issue solely on the basis of a single method is likely to lead to a distorted perspective. Each method has its own weaknesses that hold inherent threats to validity. As we can never obtain results independent of method, to ensure data are not simply an artifact of that method, the researcher needs to demonstrate that different methods would yield substantially the same outcome. Webb et al. (1966, 2nd edn) pose this issue as whether: "*A hypothesis can survive the confrontation of the series of complimentary methods of testing*" (p.174). Inconsistencies and discrepancies can alert the researcher to the need for re-examining the evaluation framework, data collection and analysis used.

Elaboration

There is a growing interest in using mixed-method designs on the basis that they can compliment each other, hence enabling a more balanced, in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Bryman, 1988; Goodwin and Goodwin 1996). Patton (1990) draws attention to the inherent strengths and weaknesses of particular methods. Quantitative approaches are particularly suited to the evaluation of outcomes and can provide a breadth of assessment. They can utilize statistical processes and lead to generalizable outcomes. In respect to this study, surveys are appropriate where representative samples are important and cause-effect relationships are being explored. In turn, qualitative approaches provide insight into process and can add depth and detail to the assessment, thus "*fleshing out*" the meaning of quantitative findings. In doing so they can overcome much of the abstraction inherent in quantitative studies:

> *"The methods are not always interchangeable. Each method can, however, be strengthened by using intrinsic qualities of the other".* (Madey, 1978 p.7).

Elaborating on this point, Bird (1992) draws attention to the fact that quantitative methods may indicate, by "*before and after*" testing, the extent of change and how frequently they occur. Qualitative methods can provide insight into how and why such changes may have occurred. Miles and Huberman (1994, 2nd edn) draws attention to the fact that the tension is not essentially between quantitative and qualitative methods but whether we adopt an analytic or a systemic approach. An analytic approach can be adopted to facilitate our understanding of a limited number of controlled variables. A systemic approach enables us to explore how variables interact in the complexity of a more naturalistic setting. Whilst the emphasis may move between these two aspects, they are inextricably inter-linked.

MIXED-METHOD DESIGNS.

The ways of combining qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study are numerous. Patton (1990) endorsed mixed-methods and drew attention to the manner in which they could be incorporated. His mixed models form "*pure*" approaches that used various permutations of three basic elements. These involved the design of the study (naturalistic or experimental), the data derived from this process (quantitative or qualitative) and the mode of analysis (e.g. statistical or content analysis). There is the option to mix approaches at each stage in this process.

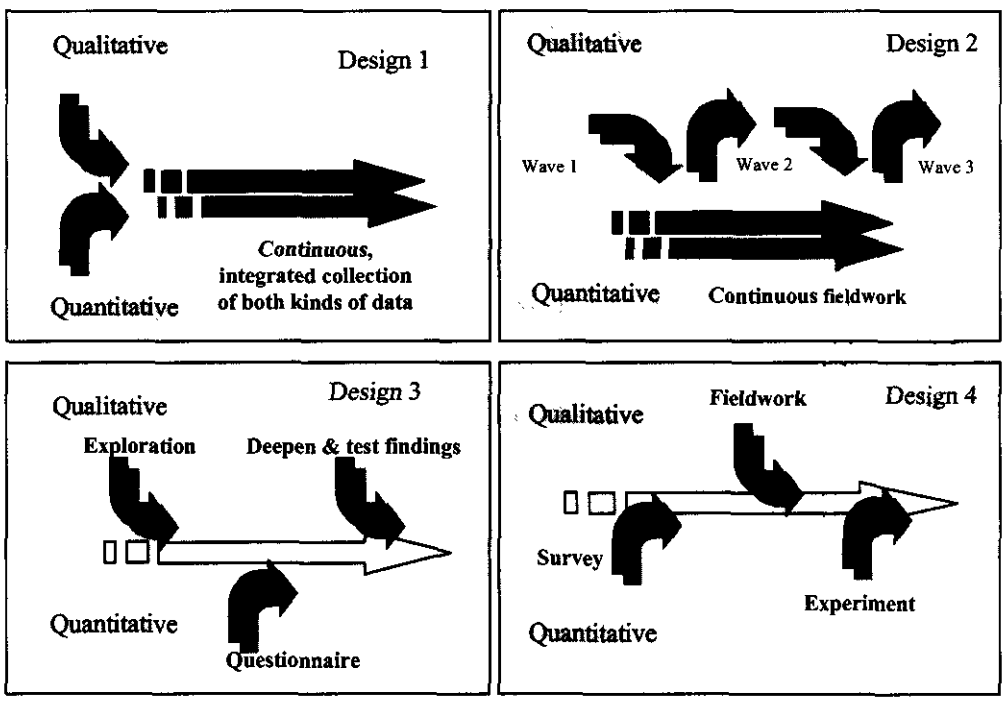
Cresswell (1994) suggested the following models:

- A two-phase design in which one approach precedes the other. Each phase is distinct, unrelated and self-contained.
- A dominant less dominant design. In this model a dominant paradigm is pursued for the majority of the study, with a small study using an alternative paradigm, being used to illuminate specific issues.
- A mixed-method design. This involves aspects of each approach being used throughout the study in the majority of steps in the design.

In considering design issues, beliefs about the nature of research underpin decisions. Eisner and Peschkin (1990) identified a continuum of perspectives. At one extreme there were researchers who genuinely perceived methodologies to be complimentary, felt the research question should determine the selection of method and that both approaches should strive to meet the same criteria of adequacy. At the other extreme were researchers who may use mixed-method designs but harbor strong beliefs about the relative merits of each. Within this later group was a quantitative dominated view in which qualitative procedures were deemed worthwhile only for exploratory studies.

Miles and Huberman (1994, 2nd edn) endorse linking designs, accord them equal status and provide their own schemata for how this might be achieved. They suggest several models. The first of these is consistent with Cresswell's mixed-methods design. Both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study are fully integrated and occur concurrently and continuously. Secondly a multi-wave

Figure 5.1. Figure illustrating the designs linking qualitative and *quantitative approaches (Miles andHuberman, 1994, 2nd edn).*



design in which qualitative fieldwork takes place continuously throughout the study and quantitative surveys occur intermittently. Thus the survey may highlight aspect to address to during the fieldwork. Conversely the field data might suggest revisions to the subsequent surveys. The third and fourth designs use alternating styles and address the way in which the two aspects may be sequenced. Whilst they are akin to the two-phase model of Cresswell's they are not intended to be distinct, but are intrinsically linked to each other. The first of

these designs is a qualitative-quantitative-qualitative design. Within this framework the first qualitative study is exploratory, it is followed by a quantitative survey and finally a qualitative phase both to enrich and test the questionnaire findings. Lastly a quantitative-qualitative-quantitative design. In this design an initial survey is employed to identify phenomenon of particular importance, via fieldwork the qualitative phase extends and adds meaning to these findings. The final quantitative phase consists of an experiment that is informed by the two earlier phases but designed to test the merits of competing hypotheses. Miles and Huberman (1994, 2nd edn) draw attention to the fact that combined in this way, both methods can fulfill descriptive, exploratory or inductive purposes. Similarly both can be used as explanatory medium or to test hypotheses.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992, 2nd edn.) opposition to mixing methods within the same design is pragmatic rather than philosophical. They suggest that rather than achieving a superior hybrid the approach was likely to fail to meet an acceptable standard from either perspective. Such arguments are also supported by Leininger (1994) who feels researchers are likely to have an insufficient grasp of the philosophical basis of each paradigm. Whilst this draws attention to the difficulty of the approach it does not present a substantive argument. Ultimately the quality of research will need to be considered on its own merits.

There are numerous precedents for the use of a mixed-method design (see Bryman, 1988). The particular combination of interviews and surveys, envisaged in this study has also been widely adopted (e.g. Stacey et al., 1975; Burgess, 1983; Bird, 1992).

In Bird's (1992) study, a design akin to Miles and Huberman's (1994) iterative process was adopted. The process also illustrated how techniques can be blended to elaborate on the data derived from other methods. Bird initially used a structured questionnaire as the aim was to produce data both quickly and in a

format which policy makers could use. One issue this addressed was the proportion of students from disadvantaged groups, taking courses. The focus in phase two however was to trace the means by which change was effected. As this involved exploring the participants understanding, she rejected a questionnaire on the grounds that it would be constraining and instead used interviews. In this way the two sets of data were used interactively to test hypotheses refined over the course of the research.

6 RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

In this study I have adopted a mixed-method design involving a (quantitative) school based survey and (qualitative) semi-structured interviews with Headteachers. The design is consequently similar to that employed by Bird (1992). It bears a resemblance to Cresswell's (1994) two phase design, to the extent that one approach precedes the other and each are relatively self contained, thus enabling the triangulation of outcomes. There are also features similar to Miles and Huberman's (1994, 2nd edn) iterative process (Figure 5.1-design 4) in that some aspects of the survey are designed to support and inform the interviews.

THE SURVEY

The literature review established little existing research on permanent exclusions from SLD schools. Consequently this study is primarily exploratory in nature. A survey, via postal questionnaire, forms the initial part of the design. This approach has been adopted as it represents an efficient method of obtaining data from a large population.

The possibility of obtaining data from documentary evidence had been considered, however, there are a number of problems with such an approach. McManus (1995) found that records relating to exclusions represented official justifications for the actions taken by the school. Accounts were skewed in the way they portrayed the information and key information was often difficult to determine. Hayden et al. (1996) also found that LEAs do not always keep the type of data required for research purposes. Moreover there were significant differences between LEAs in where, and what sort data was kept. Such difficulties were also evident in a pilot study conducted within my own LEA.

This prompted the decision both to use a survey approach and to send questionnaires directly to schools.

As exclusion is rare, one role of the survey was to identify schools which had excluded a pupil during the previous academic year. Such schools subsequently formed the target group for the interviews. The decision to interview Headteachers with recent experience of exclusion was based on the view that recall is likely to deteriorate over time, due to memory and changes in staffing. The use of the survey in this way is consequently consistent with Sieber's (1970) suggestion that they can be used to identify particular cases to be explored in more detail. A further aim of the survey was to establish data that could be probed in more detail during the course of the interviews. The survey was consequently a starting point rather than an end in itself.

The survey was designed to establish the prevalence of exclusions within SLD schools over the past five years, to explore the relationship between exclusion and other key variables and to sample Headteacher views on factors that might prompt the decision to exclude. This design enabled issues arising from the literature review to be explored. The survey also contained open-ended sections to enable Headteachers to offer information falling outside of prescribed parameters. Booth's (1996) view that exclusion presents one "*disposal*" option for removing children, prompted me to extend the survey to capture data on children who had transferred to alternative provision on behavioural grounds. This is the most obvious alternative disposal route within the more regulated, special school system.

Whilst surveys are often associated with the questionnaire approach, the distinguishing feature is more to do with the mode of data collection and its analysis (de Vaus, 1991). Bryman (1989) defined the key features as entailing the collection of quantifiable data in respect of a number of variables (usually at a single point in time) with a view to determining patterns of association.

Robson (1993), however, cautions that the "*single juncture in time*" condition is rarely met, although data are often treated as if this were the case.

Oppenheim (1992) also draws a distinction between descriptive and analytic surveys. Descriptive surveys seek to answer basic quantitative questions by establishing the incidents and distribution of variables. Analytic surveys explore the relationship between variables, often through correlational analysis. The aim in this study is to combine the descriptive and analytic functions: firstly to establish the incidents and distribution of permanent exclusions and secondly to explore the association between exclusion and other variables.

Like all research techniques, surveys have inherent advantages and disadvantages. Among the advantages is their ability to provide an efficient method of capturing large amounts of data quickly and at relatively low cost. Surveys also embrace many of the advantages associated with quantitative approaches. The overall research design, operational definitions, measures and procedures can be made explicit with relative ease (Hakim, 1987). They are consequently open to inspection and "*replicability*"[7]. Reliability is high as each respondent addresses a standard list of questions. Data is capable of being coded into numeric form and consequently statistical analysis can be employed to explore the relationship between variables. As surveys can accommodate large sample sizes the confidence with which results can be generalized can be determined within definable limits.

There are, however, a number of criticisms of survey approaches. These have been summarized by de Vaus (1991) under the following headings:

[7] Bryman (1988) uses the term "*replicability*" to differentiate between the feasibility with which the study could be replicated and the likelihood that this will actually be done.

Philosophical Criticisms

Whilst it is possible to go beyond description, to form interpretative hypotheses, these are often based on causal relationships (Oppenheim, 1992). The philosophical criticisms tend to centre on this concept.

Mill (discussed in Lincoln and Guba, 1985) proposed several methods of proof, one involved the concept of concomitant variation and this forms the basis of correlational methods. It asserts that if two measures vary together, one may be causing the other. This, however, does not provide a conclusive argument for causation: because two variables are correlated does not prove that the first causes the second. It is equally plausible that the second causes the first or that both variables are jointly influenced by another variable that has remained undetected. Consequently criteria have been suggested to demonstrate a causal relationship (Haynes, 1992):

- a statistically significant association,
- the elimination of alternative explanations
- temporal precedence whereby one variable precedes the other in time and can reliably be considered to cause the variation in the other.

Whilst surveys can establish association, eliminating competing explanations is difficult and the temporal precedence is particularly problematic (Bryman, 1988).

Not only do surveys not provide grounds to assume causation but critics of quantitative approaches (Blumer , 1967; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995) question the assumption that human social life consists of simple mechanical cause and effect relationships. As discussed earlier,[8] they hold that variables are not fixed but are fluid and contextually variable. The processes taking place within schools are consequently based on a complex layer of meanings, interpretations,

[8] See discussion of perspectives on P.17 and p.52.

values and attitudes. These are ever changing and cannot be treated as independent variables.

Technique Based Criticisms

Some criticisms are based on the narrow interpretation given to research issues. Whilst policy makers often want *'hard facts'*, such *'facts'* require interpretation and need to be set within the social context in which they were created.

The value of surveys is dependent on the quality of response they receive. There are legitimate concerns about whether these accurately reflect the beliefs, attitudes or views of respondents. Respondents often feel irritation if questions are not those they feel are important. Those respondents who can be identified may be more inclined to give socially appropriate or politically correct responses. Typically respondents are disengaged from the researchers agenda and questions may be treated with insufficient gravity. Robson (1993, p.125) captures these points in describing responses as owing more to an "*unknown mixture of politeness, boredom, desire to be seen in a good light*". Such factors are difficult to discriminate between during the analysis, but may have important implications for the study. It also needs to be recognized that there is little relationship between what people claim and what they do (Hanson, 1980).

Whilst survey methods may be reliable, we need to have confidence that the questions mean the same to each respondent. Many ambiguities or misunderstandings go undetected. Even the distinction that is made between "*opinion*" and "*factual*" questions is misleading (Schwarz, 1990). Factual questions inevitably require a degree of inference and judgement that may require interpretation. Gaskell et al. (1993) identified that even minor changes to the wording can significantly affect the response they receive. In addition the meaning of a question can be modified by the mindset established by preceding questions. However there is little research on how such problem can best be addressed (Robson, 1993). Oppenheim (1992) raises similar concerns about the

reliability of rating responses. Whilst some respondents are predisposed to use the ends of the scales, others avoid extreme categories. Such difficulties have lead to the advice that conclusions should not be based on the response to a single question. Converse and Presser (1986) suggest split sample comparisons or multiple questions (i.e. "*within*" method triangulation).

Practicalities make it difficult to include too many open-ended questions in a survey. Whilst open-ended questions provide respondents with an opportunity to expand their response, coding difficulties may compromise reliability by introducing inconsistency. Consequently there is a need to predict what information will need to be collected from the start of the study and this can restrict the range of issues addressed.

Even where the sampling strategy is well structured, postal surveys often result in a low response rate. As the characteristics of non-respondents remain unknown, this inevitably casts doubts on how representative the results are of the population being studied.

Political Criticisms

Given the need to predict outcomes prior to the research, a danger lies in merely finding what was anticipated[9]. Given this rationale, de Vaus (1991) argues that the variables used may be inclined to reflect the cultural dominance of accepted perspectives. Thus surveys may fail to generate knowledge but simply provide an ideological reflection of social reality. Moreover the knowledge produced tends to give power, over its usage, to those who already hold power. Hence surveys have the potential to be politically manipulative. The volume of data generated and statistical analyses, can falsely inflate the importance of findings.

[9] Bryman, 1988 p.97 challenges whether this simplistic argument reflects the reality of survey research.

Response

I accept the argument that social reality is fluid, contextually variable and determined by processes involving interpretation and negotiation. A variety of factors are likely to be relevant to the decision to permanently exclude a pupil. How adequately exclusion can be viewed, as a function of simple variables such as the level of staffing, is open to criticism. Such considerations, however, underpin the decision to use a mixed-method design. The role of the survey is not to build a model of exclusion, in the way assumed above. The aim is to identify the probability with which key variables can be associated with exclusion, and explore how they may be orchestrated in the decision making process through the interviews. The survey consequently forms a starting point rather than an end in itself.

I acknowledge that there are relative strengths and weaknesses in the approach. Reliability and generalization are countered by concerns about the validity of the data, surveys produce. Some of the superficial issues of validity can be addressed through the piloting of the questionnaire and modification to the wording. Similarly procedure can be set in place to secure as high a return rate as possible, in order to support the integrity of the sampling strategy. Nevertheless the more substantive philosophical issues that factors are fluid and contextually related remain valid.

I have no response to the charge that I bring socially laden views to this study. Awareness of this provides some safeguard against such distortion but little more. There will be inherent biases; where possible I will draw attention to the potential for these to compromise the outcomes. However much of the political argument is countered in this context, by the research being conducted independent of funding, or the influence of policy makers. As such it has more potential to produce knowledge, which may represent a challenge to those who hold power and engender change on behalf of less powerful groups.

INTERVIEWS

The interviews with Headteachers represent an equal part of the study. Whilst informed by the survey, the interviews represent a relatively discrete aspect of the study and have been addressed from a qualitative perspective. A semi-structured interview approach was adopted, as the focus of this study is the meanings and perspectives Headteachers ascribe to permanent exclusion. Harré and Secord (1972) argue that the best way to explore people's perspectives is by talking to them.

Discussion Of The Technique

Interviews have been described as a conversation with a purpose (Dexter, 1970). Whilst they may have the appearance of conversation, an interview is not intended to be a two-way interaction. The aim is to obtain information and it is not customary for the interviewer to raise and defend opinions (Cohen and Manion, 1989, 2nd edn.). It is initiated and controlled, by the interviewer in order to pursue research objectives. The unnaturalness of this relationship has itself attracted comment.

Inherent in the interview is a power imbalance in which the respondent is placed in a subordinate role (Foster and Parker, 1995). This lead Powney and Watts (1987) to classify interviews on the basis of the degree of control involved. In respondent interviews, the interviewer remains firmly in control, hence both structured and some semi-structured interviews might meet this criterion. In informant interviews the main focus is to capture the interviewees perception and the approach is less directive. The balance of power within an interview raises ethical concerns. An interview in which the interviewer appropriates information from the interviewee, solely for the interviewer's use, constitutes an asymmetrical power relationship. As such, it exploits those interviewed (Oakley, 1981).

The degree of structure is traditionally perceived to fall within a continuum, extending from structured to semi-structured or unstructured interviews. Structured interviews tend to derive from a quantitative, positivist tradition, typically involving the presentation of the same set of questions to interviewees. These are presented in a standardized form and responses are coded to fit prescribed categories. In an attempt to attain neutrality and preserve objectivity there is little scope for the interviewer to improvise or divert from the script. They are required to exhibit "*interested listening*" which reinforces participation but exhibits no evaluation of responses. Tensions can arise from the fact that respondents must answer with reference to the interviewer's conception of the problem and are powerless to challenge underlying assumption (Roiser, 1974).

The other end of the continuum has been described as unstructured, although whether such an entity can exist as a research approach, has been questioned. Whyte (1982) argues that there must always be an element of structure to constitute research. The semi-structured approach is characterized by the use of open-ended questions and flexibility in the way it is administered. The interviewer can consequently explain or clarify questions, thus increasing the potential of establishing a shared understanding and achieve a meaningful response. Many researchers would argue that it is not always possible to specify in advance what questions are appropriate, or even relevant. Semi-structured interviews attempt to understand the interviewee's perspective without imposing any '*a priori*' categorization that might limit the inquiry (Fontana and Frey, 2000). The approach consequently provides an opportunity to divert from the planned format and explore topics that arise within the interview. The aim is to capture rich and detailed material, usually in the interviewee's own words (Lofland and Lofland, 1984, 2nd edn). Differences between structured and semi-structured approaches spring from their epistemological roots.

The interviewer must be an attentive listener who shapes the process into a comfortable form of social engagement. The quality of rapport, empathy and

understanding is important to the outcome. The process has been likened to the unthreatening, and cordial interactions that occur in everyday life, although Lofland (1971) queries how commonly such skills are actually exhibited. A key issue is to develop the trust and confidence of those being interviewed, in essence "*revealing private parts of their life*" for "*flimsy guarantees of confidentiality*" (Finch, 1984 p.173). The level of informality achieved in the interview is, however, a matter of negotiation. In Finch's case, disclosure that she was a clergyman's wife provided a motive for the study and gave her entrée to the group. Conversely Cunningham-Burley (1985) found that her interview of grandparents was more formal than she wished, as she was given little scope to depart from her schedule.

It is important to be aware of inherent problems in using an interview approach:

Technique Based Issues

From a positivist perspective, personal bias is more difficult to control in semi-structured interviews. Flexibility can introduce inconsistencies that affect the comparability of interviews. In interviews many important variables lie outside of the interviewer's control. The National Science Foundation (1997) draw attention to the way in which interruption and seating arrangements may effect the proceedings and inhibit the acquisition of information. Another variable is the way in which information is recorded. Taped interviews enable the interviewer to remain attentive but introduce a level of formality that can inhibit what interviewees are prepared to disclose. Conversely note-taking may disrupt the flow of the interview, and can introduce selective bias into what is recorded.

The power dynamics that exist within society also have implications for how interviewees respond to the interviewer. Key variables include age, gender, status and ethnicity.

Labov (in Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989) found that when interviewed by different interviewers, the language of black children could be shown to be highly variable. One difficulty lies in reconciling different frames of reference. In addition, the interviewer may hold stereotypical views that interviewees may reject or find degrading. Being attuned to the culture enables the researcher to blend into the environment and to establish a common frame of reference. However it may also make it more difficult to recognize patterns in familiar situations and interpret the meaning attached to events.[10] Whilst these comments focus on ethnicity they apply equally to the other factors. Some feminist researchers argue that it is preferable for women to interview women, as the interview process is affected by the status and role of women in society (Finch, 1984). Oakley (1981) also argues for their being a more common frame of reference. She suggests that being a mother was crucial in the response she derived from other mothers. The perceived status of the interviewer also has implications for the rapport that can be established. For example, Measor (1985) found that her appearance affected the outcome of interviews in schools. Dressing conservatively aided her interviews with teachers but had the opposite impact on pupils. The age of an interviewer also influence the role that is assigned and may modify perceptions about status. Some of these factors can be manipulated; others are fixed. However once the interviewers presentational self is cast, it has important implications for the outcome (Fontana and Frey, 2000).

Philosophical Issues

The flexibility in semi-structured interviews purports to enable a view of the respondent's social world to be captured. Underlying assumptions are that such data are context independent and free from the influence of the interviewer.

[10] Interactions lack "*stranger value*" (Beattie, 1964).

Gubrium and Holstein, (2000) suggest that how the social world is experienced is partially constructed by language, as well as being the mechanism by which perspectives are conveyed. We take for granted that we inter-subjectively experience the same reality and therefore understand each other in its terms. However there is an element of naiveté in this belief. Moreover the interviewer-interviewee relationship and the nature of the discourse are at the heart of the process, but are problematic (Cicourel, 1964). Dingwall (1997) is critical of the view that the nearer we come to the interviewee the closer we come to their "*real self*". It ignores the fact that the self is a process that is accomplished in the interaction. Orne (1962) illustrates this by drawing attention to the fact that interviewees are not blank entities but actively try to make sense of the situation. Having formed a hypothesis about the nature of the process the interviewee will decide the stance they are going to take. Consequently interviews are interactional encounters, with the interviewee constructing knowledge around questions and responses. Hence the picture of social reality obtained must have a more tenuous relationship to the world being investigated.

Response

Whilst Bogdan and Taylor (1975) identify the need for interviewers to monitor comments and actions that may impede the interview, the view that the interview is an unambiguous research instrument is clearly false. It is important to acknowledge that the researcher can never fully overcome these limitations. Fundamentally, interactions between interviewee and interviewer create a unique social situation (Lofland, 1971). The interview is a medium through which both parties create the data captured, and the interviewer is implicated in the process. The critical issue is that an attempt is made to understand the impact of these factors and acknowledge that the interview is a dynamic process.

I accept that the interviews will not constitute comparable experiences, however this was never intended, nor is the analysis dependent on such factors. The approach here, is based on principles associated with qualitative methodologies, and the methods of analysis fall loosely within the style associated with "*Grounded Theory*" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

What actually constitutes grounded theory is itself contested, and the debate has become more confused in recent years, primarily due to the schism between Glaser and Strauss (Glaser, 1992; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Despite a number of differences both approaches have been associated with objectivist roots (Guba and Lincoln, 1994), in that there is an assumption of an external, objective reality that is revealed by the process. I acknowledge that the interviews are unable to generate data that is commensurate with the social world under investigation (Cicourel, 1964). They are situated activities and the data constitutes a situated accounts (Lofland, 1971). Consequently, the approach here is more consistent with what has recently been labeled constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000). Within constructivism there is an assumption of multiple social realities, data are generated from the unique interaction that exists between interviewer and interviewee. It claims therefore only to interpret "*a reality*", as understood by the researchers experience, the interviewees' portrayal and the interaction between the two.

7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The need to establish principles for conducting research involving human subjects was prompted by the Nuremberg trials. Points to arise included the obligation to ensure participants are fully informed about the nature of the research, give their informed consent and are free to withdraw at any time. Most organizations involved in research have their own ethical guidelines or codes of conduct (e.g. British Psychological Society, 2000), founded on these principles.

These guidelines build ethical considerations on the relationship that needs to exist between researcher and participant. Good research is based on participants being treated with consideration and respect. In addition, the implication of the study should be considered from a variety of standpoints to eliminate potential threats to the values and dignity of those involved. An important factor is the participant's confidence in the study, which in part will derive from their perceptions about the quality of the research (British Educational Research Association, 1992).

There is an expectation that researchers will obtain the informed consent of participants prior to the start of the research. Key tenants are the concepts of "*consent*", "*informed*" and the relationship that exists between them.

Consent implies that participants should take part willingly and be aware of their right to opt-out of the proceedings at any point. Sensitivity to the power dynamics that might exist is important in this respect. Where researchers are in a position of authority over participants, this should not be allowed to coerce participation. Similarly participants should be free to withdraw irrespective of whether inducements have been offered. Obtaining the consent of those who may not fully appreciate what is involved (e.g. children) raise further

complications and call for additional safeguards, such as the consent of parents, guardians or ethics committees.

Informed implies that participants should fully understand what is involved, particularly issues which might influence their willingness to participate. In addition to the immediate demands on them, they should understand the use that will be made of the data, the extent to which confidentiality can be protected and how outcomes will be disseminated. If anonymity cannot be guaranteed, participant must be warned of this before they participate. There is an expectation that the investigator will explain any aspects of the research about which participants enquire. Conversely a failure to make a full disclosure, deliberately withhold information, or consciously mislead participants represents unacceptable practice.

Some codes further advocate that participant should have the right to retrospectively withdraw their consent. If this occurs researchers have an obligation to destroy the data collected. Similarly, as longitudinal research passes through different phases, the way in which data is used may change and could require consent to be obtained on a number of occasions.

Guidelines tend to be simplistic but ethical considerations are complex. Some organizations offer more detailed elaboration on complications that may arise. For example, the British Psychological Society (2000) concede that, in exceptional cases, explaining the research hypothesis in advance of the study may compromise the outcomes. They consequently draw a distinction between withholding details and falsely informing participants of the purpose of the research. To help clarify the parameters of acceptable practice they suggest that if the subject were likely to object on being debriefed, it would suggest that the ethical basis on which the research is based is questionable. Similarly the Medical Research Council (2000a) concede that under exceptional circumstances it may not always be possible to obtain prior consent, yet the

research might still be judged to be ethically valid, as it supports the competing needs of other members of society.

Researchers are advised to ensure information is not used in ways that cause distress or harm. Participants also have a right to remain anonymous and this should be the understanding, unless explicit agreement to the contrary has been reached (British Educational Research Association, 1992). Researchers are consequently responsible for protecting both the confidentiality of participants and the data in question.

Issues of confidentiality are further enshrined in legislation. Many organizations (e.g. Medical Research Council, 2000b) advise that where an explicit assurance of confidentiality has been given, this may be deemed to constitute a legally binding contract between the parties. To disclose confidential information without consent, may consequently be deemed to have wronged an individual. Moreover such disclosure does not have to cause harm or distress for it to be unlawful (Medical Research Council, 2000a). This however is a controversial area of law, in which there are competing interpretations and the situation has recently been modified by the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Data Protection Act, 1998 sets conditions on the collection of data, the accuracy of the data maintained and the subsequent use made of such data. Whether or not an explicit pledge has been given, there are duties to keep some aspects of personal information confidential and secure. Personal data in this context relates to information about living people who may be identified from that data. Where this applies, individual also have a right to know what information are held on them and are entitled to challenge the accuracy of those records. Consequently when people provide information, they should be told the use which will be made of it and to whom it will be passed. However research that is unlikely to lead to damage or distress is given special exemption. Equally

data, which cannot be linked directly to individuals, falls outside the scope of the Act. The removal of identifiers as soon as possible in the data management process is often advocated in order to overcome these requirements (British Educational Research Association, 1992; Medical Research Council, 2000b). This advice applies both to paper and electronic records. In some cases, it may be possible to deduce identities through a combination of information. Researchers should consequently consider this aspect before publication.

The Human Rights Act 1998 relates to judgements about the appropriate balance between the rights of the individual, and the legitimate needs of society. The confidentiality of information has been viewed as an integral part of the obligation to respect private life.

There is an important distinction between what is ethical and what is lawful. Interpretations of the legal issues can vary and may permit practices that are unethical. The first consideration must be whether the research is ethical and secondly whether the procedures are lawful (Medical Research Council, 2000a).

8 METHOD

SURVEY ARRANGEMENTS

Questionnaire Development

As well as exploring Headteacher views on exclusion, the survey captured a range of related information. The content can be summarized under the following headings (a detailed explanation is offered in Appendix A):

- **Basic data.** To establish initially whether responses were from a maintained day SLD special schools and to capture basic information about the characteristics of the school concerned (e.g. the number of pupils on roll).
- **Contextual data.** To collect information about local authority context in which the school is operating (e.g. the availability of residential provision).
- **Exclusion data.** To determine the characteristics of pupils who had been permanently excluded or had transferred to alternative provision on grounds of their behaviour. These items also explored the behaviour triggering exclusion and the outcomes (within 6 months) following exclusion.
- **Data on Headteacher views.** This related to views on maintaining pupils more challenging behaviours on the roll of the school, the reasons they might consider making a permanent exclusion and their views on the use of specialist residential placements.

Guidance on the development of questionnaires (e.g. Foster and Parker, 1995) draws attention to the need to pilot instruments. Key issues are that questions should be unambiguous and that the mechanisms for collecting response function effectively. Twenty-five SLD schools were used in the piloting arrangements. This consisted of five local schools and a random selection of

twenty others. A return paid envelope and explanatory letter accompanied questionnaires. The over-representation of local schools enabled Headteachers to be interviewed in order to identify weaknesses in design and to establish their interpretation of questions. The accuracy of their responses was also checked against documentary evidence (LEA records etc.). In addition ten telephone interviews were conducted with other respondents. Some authorities advocate observing respondents complete the draft (in order to question their interpretation at the time) but this did not prove possible (Robson, 1993). This pilot study highlighted a number of issues that needed to be addressed (Appendix B).

Arrangements

Identifying schools officially designated, as SLD is problematic, as the DfEE do not publish this information. Moreover the situation is somewhat fluid in that LEAs reorganize special school provision in the light of changing demands. In this study the "*Education Year Book 1998/99*" (Collier et al., 1998) was cross-referenced with "*Which School? For Special Needs 1998/9*" (Bingham, 1998) to identify 339 schools in England which appeared to have an SLD designation.

Reaves (1992) discusses the relationship between sample size and error. The proportion of the population needing to be sampled decreases systematically as the target population rises. For example, whilst a sample size of 79 is recommended for a total population of 100, a similar level of confidence can be achieved with a sample of only 279, for a population of 1000. To ensure that 95% of the sample response is likely to lie within 5% of the total population response, a sample size of just over 170 schools is necessary for 339 schools. As the practical difficulties of managing 170 data sets, as opposed to 339 are marginal, all SLD schools were included in the survey.

Schools were sent a questionnaire, explanatory letter (both in Appendix D) and pre-paid return envelope. It is suggested that the response rate for postal surveys

can be enhanced, by a third, by giving consideration to both the timing of correspondence and the follow-up arrangements (Robson, 1993). This correspondence arrived in schools in mid- August 1999, during the summer holidays and several weeks before the start of the Autumn Term. A reminder[11] and further set of material was sent to non-returning schools in late October. This coincided with the start of the half-term break. No subsequent correspondence was sent to schools.

INTERVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

Although any Headteacher, of an SLD school, might be in a position to offer views on permanent exclusion, the design involved interviewing five Headteachers with experience of having made an exclusion during the academic year 1998-9. It was felt that these Headteachers would be in a better position to offer a practical, rather than theoretical perspective on this issue. The timing was also considered, to allow some of the initial trauma to have been resolved but to insure that the incident was sufficiently recent to be readily recalled. Information was also less susceptible to being lost through staff changes. In Hayden et al.'s (1996) study of primary school, they indicate that many staff remained distressed by the experience of exclusion, some time after the event, and were particularly sensitive to any implied criticism. Whilst these dynamics may have been in operation and could have caused respondents to be more defensive in their responses, this was not obvious.

The interviews took place in the summer term 2000. The survey identified nineteen schools as having made a permanent exclusion during this time period. One of these involved a pupil known to me. Leaving aside philosophical arguments about whether objectivity is ever achievable, I felt there would be too many complications in attempting to include this school. The remaining schools were approached on the pragmatic basis of the distance they required me to

[11] Appendix D.

travel. Visiting schools at a distance, could not have been easily accommodated given competing work commitments.

I acknowledge the sampling weakness resulting from this decision. The main implication of this selection procedure was that schools were primarily from the South of England. Hayden et al. (1996) suggests that LEA policies can influence the level of exclusions, either through the quality of support they provide or the pressure they exert on schools. In mitigation I would draw attention to these schools falling within a wide geographical area, extending from Dunstable, to Aylesbury, to Taunton. There was consequently a comprehensive mixture of school sizes and LEA contexts. The key issue is whether the views of Headteachers can be expected to differ significantly between the north and south of England. Moreover as the study involves a mixed-method design, I am not solely dependent on this data as a basis for generalization. The function of the interviews was to establish a rich qualitative picture, which would highlight the significance of the survey data and how these factors impact on the decisions relating to exclusion.

Schools were sent a letter that made reference to the survey and asked if they would be willing to be interviewed (Appendix D). Two of the seven Headteachers approached declined to be interviewed. The reasons given related to pressure of work. No further contact was made to explore whether these reasons were valid[12]. However neither of these schools appeared atypical in respect to their survey response and each had excluded only one child over the past five years.

The interviews adopted a semi-structured format[13]. A schedule was used to ensure key points were covered. Headteachers were also asked to explain the circumstances of their own permanent exclusion. The order in which points

[12] Acknowledging their right not to participate -see ethical considerations.
[13] The arrangements had previously been piloted on two schools within my own LEA.

were addressed, varied between interviews, depending on the flow of discussion.

Bunting and McCall (1995) suggest that many schools may simply exclude because they do not want difficult pupils on role. This raises the issue of whether points made in the interviews represent "*true*" explanations or are made to justify the actions taken. There could be a tendency to project problems onto others and avoid more threatening disclosures. As the focus of the interview is the constructs used by Headteachers, no external checks on validity are possible. The impressions of others would merely identify competing perspectives. This does not however imply that points were accepted on face value.

The interview experiences were varied. Some Headteachers had prepared notes, but the majority relied on improvised responses. Whilst conscious of the desirability of minimizing disruptions, the interviews took place within schools and at times convenient to the Headteachers. Consequently some were conducted during the school day and were marked by minor interruptions.

The interviews were recorded using two Dictaphones with conference facilities. This made them less obtrusive and ensured that points made by both interviewer and interviewee was recorded. It also ensured that tapes were consistent with the transcription facilities. A professional audio-typist initially typed each transcript. These were then checked, for accuracy, against the original tapes and the contemporaneous notes. Where possible the analysis was conducted prior to the next interview, to enable progressive focusing. However this was not always possible as the time-scale was constrained by school holidays. Taping the interviews did not present any obvious problems, although I acknowledge that it may have made interviewees more guarded in their responses.

The initial coding of the transcripts was informal[14] and was conducted at the paragraph level. A mixture of memo writing (Charmaz, 2000) and cognitive maps (Miles and Huberman, 1994)[15] was then used to identify patterns in these codes. As categories emerged the data were re-coded into categories and sub-categories, to form a hierarchical coding structure[16]. This facilitated the collation of data into an explanatory description and was conducted at the individual sentence level. I acknowledge that some authors, have been critical of "*fracturing the data*" in this way. Glaser and Strauss (1967), however, proposed this approach in order to provide psychological distancing and to help with the management of the task.

Data with similar codings were then gathered together to create categories reflecting common themes[17]. Categories were combined or sub-divided to best describe the emerging structure. Where sentences related to several issues they were duplicated and collated separately. This analysis was conducted using basic cut and paste functions. This procedure provided an audit trail, linking the interview to the final analysis.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The explanatory letters were designed to provide Headteachers with sufficient information to enable them to make an informed decision about whether to participate. The letter requesting an interview indicated the anticipated time commitment and alerted Headteachers of the intention to audio-record the interview. Thus participants had the information necessary to give their "*informed consent*".

[14] See Appendix F.
[15] A cognitive map displays basic concepts and indicates the relationship between them. Figure 11.1 constitutes a comprehensive version. The links displayed are directional.
[16] See Appendix F.
[17] See Appendix F

The letters explained the aim of the research, assured confidentiality and guaranteed that schools would not be identified or identifiable in any subsequent reports. The only pressure to participate in the survey was in the form of follow-up letters. This process was designed to enhance the response rate and Headteachers were under no obligation to respond. No pressure was placed on those Headteachers who did not wish to participate in the interviews.

The research data in this design relates to Headteachers' perceptions of why pupils are excluded. This information essentially belongs to the Headteacher in as much as the information derives from the practice of their professional duties. Whilst the information relates to individual pupils, consent was not obtained at this level, as it might cause undue distress, and details about the child were not the focus of this study. Given that the information remains anonymous there is less obligation to ensure that consent is obtained from the person on whom the information is based. As the individual is not identified at any point the procedures do not breach the Data Protection Act, 1989. Whilst the schools were identifiable from the questionnaires (in order to identify subjects for the interviews) this was coded when entered on the database and these codings were kept separate to the data.

Lincoln and Gubba (1985) suggest that respondent validation is the best method of ensuring the accuracy of data. Transcripts of the interviews were consequently sent to interviewees prior to their analysis. This also supported and enhanced the ethical basis of the study.

9 SURVEY RESULTS

Quality Of Response

A total of 245 questionnaires were returned constituting a response rate of 72%. This was a high response to a postal survey of this type and exceeded that achieved in many similar surveys (e.g. Male, 1996a).

Re-organisation within LEAs had lead to one school being closed, others had either been incorrectly categorized or the designation had changed. Seven SLD schools had residential provision and fell outside the criteria for this study. Two questionnaires had serious omissions and were discounted. Overall 208 questionnaires contained a complete data set. In a further seventeen, only details relating to the numbers and distribution of pupils within the school was omitted. Where this did not threaten the integrity of the analysis, the data from some sections were included. The number of questionnaires used in the analysis consequently changes. Where this arises the number of responses has been stated.

Generalizability Of Findings

Only eight LEAs were not represented in the final returns. These tended to be small Metropolitan authorities with only one SLD school. Consequently failure to make a return significantly influenced there representation. This was the main demographic anomaly in non-returning schools and was not disproportionate to their overall representation.

OfSTED (2000) quotes data from the Register of Educational Establishments for the academic year 1998/9. In doing so, however, they combine data from day and residential schools in some categories. Consequently, a direct comparison cannot be made although this data provides a reference point against which the representation of this survey can be assessed. Overall 322 day

SLD schools had been contacted in this survey. OfSTED (2000) indicates there were 331 SLD schools for the same academic year. On the basis of the data from both studies I would suggest that this survey can be considered representative of SLD schools in the UK.

Figure 9.1: Table comparing data from this survey & PANDA data for the corresponding year (OfSTED, 2000).

	Data from this survey	**PANDA data**
Estimated number of Day SLD schools in UK	322	331
Gender percentage male	62%	62.5 % (Day & residential)
Pupil : teacher ratio	1 : 6.29	1: 6.34 (Day & residential)
Average number of pupils on roll	66	64 (Day & residential)
Average distribution of pupils:		
Boys		
0-4 yrs	3	4
5-10 yrs	18	19
11-15 yrs	15	16
16-19 yrs	7	8
Girls		
0-4 yrs	2	3
5-10 yrs	9	11
11-15 yrs	10	10
16-19 yrs	5	6

Note: With the exception of the number of day SLD schools, all of the PANDA data combines pupils in both day and residential (maintained and non-maintained) SLD schools.

In describing the results I will follow the structure used in the questionnaire. At points, however, the comments generated themes that cut across this framework. Similarly some comments were more easily rationalized as answers to other questions. Rather than reiterate points I have explored themes as they arise, in order to give coherence to the description. That similar issues occur, in response to different questions however, is important in supporting their validity, consequently some acknowledgment of this fact will be made.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Day SLD schools tend to be relatively small, the total number of pupils on roll ranged from 19-147, with a mean of 66 (n=207). The number of pupils within each year group was relatively stable but the distribution within individual schools could be distorted. There is a gender imbalance amongst pupils, with males being more prevalent (i.e. 62%:38% male:female), such a skew is well documented elsewhere (e.g. Kiernan and Kiernan, 1994). It is relevant to this study in that there is a connection between males, behavioural challenges and exclusion.

The majority of schools (86%) catered for pupils aged 3-19 years. The proportion of pre-school pupils was extremely variable, presumably reflecting differences in local arrangements. Similar anomalies were evident with Post-16 pupils and are likely to reflect policies on the transfer of pupils to FE provision. It is evident, however, that many pupils continue at their day SLD school between the ages of 16-19 years. Only two schools, catering for the secondary phase, had no pupils over the age of 16 years.

The staff:pupil ratios varied. Whilst this may reflect differences in resourcing policy, it could also signify differences in the type of pupils for whom the school are catering (e.g. the proportion of PMLD pupils). The mean pupil:teacher ratio was 6.3:1 and the mean pupil:LSA ratio was 4.1:1.

Figure 9.2: Table of class sizes and percentages of high dependency pupils

	Range	*Mean*
Class sizes (i.e. pupils / classes)	5.1 - 11.3	8.1.
Percentage of PMLD pupils	0-100%	29.7%
Percentage of challenging behaviour pupils	0-62%	17.2%

The number of classrooms allowed the average class size to be calculated and also provides an index of the pressure on classroom space. Pupil characteristics

were determined as an estimated percentage of pupils exhibiting PMLD or challenging behaviour. However, no definitions of these categories were provided, consequently the data is crude and the reliability with which these data can be regarded, is qualified. A more objective measure was not possible within the scope of this study.

Although most schools provide for a range of needs, two schools catered exclusively for pupils with PMLD. Equally the arrangements used by schools to meet such needs vary. Some schools teach PMLD pupils and/or those exhibiting challenging behaviour in segregated classrooms, whilst others look to integrate them into the main body of the school.

Figure 9.3: Table showing the arrangements for meeting the needs of pupils with PMLD and challenging behaviour.

Both PMLD & CB integrated	Only CB integrated	Only PMLD integrated	Neither groups integrated	Total
140	55	15	16	226
61.95%	24.34%	6.64%	7.07%	100%

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE NUMBER OF CHALLENGING PUPILS.

A small majority of Headteachers (54.42%; n=226) perceived there to have been an increase in the number of pupils exhibiting behavioural challenges. Those who offered an explanation, responded in the following way:

A minority of schools reported the increase to be a function of local dynamics. A common example, was where the school attracted the placement of pupils with more challenging behaviours because they had become associated with a level of expertise. The majority of responses, however, perceived there to have been a change in the characteristics of pupil's placed in SLD schools[18]. The

[18] This theme reoccurred in other sections of the questionnaire.

most common reason related to an increase in the number of pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Pupils with less challenging behaviours were viewed as being more likely to be placed in either mainstream or MLD schools.

Figure 9.4: Table illustrating the reasons given for the perceived *increase in pupils exhibiting behavioural challenges.*

Category	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
More ASD pupils	61	52.14%
Influx of MLD pupils	15	12.82%
Transfer from EBD schools	11	9.40%
Reluctance of LEA to use Independent residential schools	9	7.69%
Pupils with additional medical complications	5	4.27%
More pupils with ADHD	2	1.71%
Closure of Hospital schools	2	1.71%
Other	12	10.26%
Total =	117	100%

Conversely pupils having a mixture of learning difficulties and challenging behaviour were perceived to be more likely to gravitate towards an SLD school placement. In some cases the lack of provision within an LEA restricted placement options. Headteachers also reported a move away from the use of specialist facilities, such as hospital or independent residential schools. The net result was that many pupils, who would previously have been catered for elsewhere, were now placed on the roll of day SLD schools.

In response to the question as to whether schools had pupils "*who would be more appropriately placed elsewhere, on grounds of their behaviour*" 82 Headteachers (36.28%; n=226) answered affirmatively. Extending earlier discussion, Headteachers cited the difficulty in meeting the needs of pupils with ASD within a school environment that already catered for pupils, ranging from PMLD to MLD. Some emphasized the importance of establishing a balanced pupil population in order to ensure that teaching and learning could take place. Associated with this was the need for more specialist training in respect to

ASD, together with modifications to classroom arrangements. In some cases exclusion or placement elsewhere was felt to provide a mechanism for coping with an unmanageable diversity of need.

Figure 9.5: Table of reasons given for perceiving there to be pupils who would be more appropriately placed elsewhere.

Category	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Need for more consistency of care	30	31.91%
Increase in number of ASD pupils	19	20.21%
Limitations of resourcing	12	12.77%
Lack of space	11	11.70%
More MLD pupils	9	9.57%
Incompatible with needs of other pupils	5	5.31%
Vulnerability of PMLD pupils	5	5.31%
Physical management	3	3.19%
Total =	94	99.97%

Note: Headteachers were permitted to offer more than one response

Whilst it was acknowledged that there was often no more appropriate placement, MLD/EBD pupils tended to exhibit behaviours that were qualitatively different from the rest of the school and a different approach seemed appropriate. The introduction of these pupils into an environment catering for PMLD pupils with little mobility, life threatening conditions and no means of self-protection, was also a concern.

The notion that some pupils were not appropriately placed in an SLD school also featured in the reasons underpinning exclusion. This form of alienation may be exacerbated, where labels have been assigned to the pupil. Similar responses were also cited as a reason for the perceived *"Increase in exclusions"* and views on why pupils might warrant a residential school placement.

The most common response, as to why a pupil was not felt to be placed appropriately, was the need for greater consistency in the approach required

between the school and home (frequently referred to as a "*24hr curriculum*"). This was a recurring theme and is discussed in more detail later.

LOCAL CONTEXT

The majority of LEAs do not have residential schools for pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour, neither do the majority of Social Services Departments have residential provision for such children. From this sample only ten LEAs had residential schooling. This was often in the form of weekday boarding in hostels attached to day SLD schools. However, a few responses indicated that despite the lack of such provision, pupils tended to remain locally because of access to independent providers.

Responses also indicated that the majority of LEAs do not have a policy defining the criteria under which pupils exhibiting behavioural challenges would be considered for residential schooling. Neutral comments indicated that either Headteachers were unsure if such a policy existed or a policy was currently under development. Again only a minority of Headteachers indicated that the level of respite provision for pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour was well addressed. Whilst some indicated that services were beginning to improve, 60% perceived the level of respite to be inadequate.

The majority of respondents indicated shortcomings in the ability of local authority services to work collaboratively together. Again a small number suggested that either there had been some recent improvement, or that they had been able to work well on occasions. Such collaboration is only tested in respect to individual cases and the response tends to be dependent on the circumstances. The advocacy skills of parents were felt to have a bearing on how well services responded.

Akin to the issue above, approximately 50% suggested that collaboration between Education, Social Services and Health over the joint funding of residential placements was problematic, although nearly 20% felt arrangements were improving or had worked well at times. These responses indicated tensions around the funding of placements, in some LEAs.

Figure 9.6: Table illustrating responses about the local context (n =224).

	Yes		No
1. Does your LEA have a residential school for children with SLDs who exhibit challenging behaviour?	5.8% n=13	0.4% n=1	93.8% n=210
2. Does the local Social Services Department have a residential facility for children with SLDs who exhibit challenging behaviour?	15.6% n=35	4.0% n=9	80.4% n=180
3. Does your LEA have a policy defining the criteria under which pupils with behavioural difficulties would be considered for residential provision?	24.1% n=54	14.7% n=33	60.3% n=135
4. Are the respite needs of parents with children exhibiting challenging behaviour well addressed in your local authority?	27.7% n=62	12.1% n=27	60.3% n=135
5. Do you feel Education, Social Services and Health work collaboratively to support pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour?	14.3% n=32	8.0% n=18	77.7% n=174
6. Is there good collaboration between Education, Social Services and Health over the joint funding of residential placements?	26.3% n=59	22.8% n=51	50.4% n=113

Note: The prompts required a "*yes / no*" response, however this was resisted by some respondents.

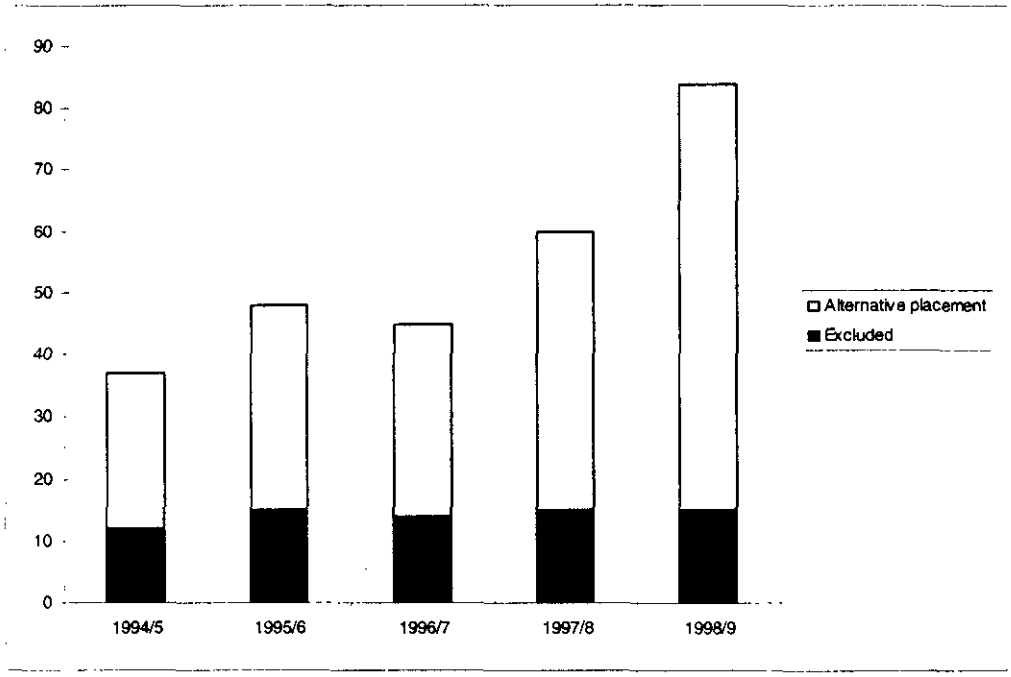
PREVALENCE

Schools were asked to indicate the number of pupils who had left the school on behavioural grounds, over the past 5 years, and to denote if this had been via permanent exclusion or a planned transfer to an alternative school.

Permanent exclusions, in this group of schools, were fairly static ranging from 12-18 per year (mean = 15.4 per year). It did not support the hypothesis that the figures were mirroring those in mainstream schools. Assuming the overall population has been stable, the data suggests a prevalence of approximately 0.1% of the pupil population per year.

As in the mainstream sector, some SLD schools were (statistically) more likely to exclude, with the highest excluding school being 10 times above the national average. The prevalence of exclusion in individual schools ranged from 0-1.11% of the pupil population per year. The other group of pupils leaving day SLD are those who make a planned transfer to alternative provision. Within this study, these ranged from 25-72 per year over the same period (mean = 43.8 per year). Again if we assume the overall population has been stable, this suggests that this relates to 0.29% of the pupil population. As with permanent exclusions there was considerable variation between schools (ranged from 0-3% per year).

Figure 9.7. Graph illustrating the total number of permanent exclusions made by SLD schools between 1994-5 & 1998-9 and the number of pupils transferring to alternative provision - on behavioural grounds. (n=207).



Statistical anomalies within SLD schools need to be considered with caution, as the small number of pupils makes the data extremely volatile. A school that has

excluded 1 pupil over the past 5 years but happens to have a population of 25 pupils, would automatically come close to the upper end of the range (i.e. 0.8% per year) and would register as being seven times above the national average.

Setting this data into the national context, suggests that on average approximately 25 pupils are permanently excluded from English day SLD each year and a further 71 pupils transfer to other forms of provision due to their behaviour. Whilst the numbers are relatively small, the data suggests a dramatic increase in the number of pupils transferring to alternative provision, over recent years. Taking the figures for 1994/5 as a base line suggests that the numbers nearly doubled by 1997/8 and were higher again in 1998/9. Again if we assume a stable population, the prevalence of these two phenomenon have increased from a 1994/5 baseline in the following manner:

Figure 9.8: Table illustrating the increase in pupils leaving SLD school via a permanent exclusion or transfer to alternative provision.

	1994/5	1995/6	1996/7	1997/8	1998/9
Total	37	50	51	68	90
Percentage of pupil population	0.27%	0.35%	0.37%	0.49%	0.65%

Note: Headteacher were only asked to identify the number of pupils on roll in 1998/9. Consequently these figures rests on the assumption that the pupil population has been relatively stable. This can only be validated with reference to data outside of this survey.

The increase is so great that the trend is difficult to ignore and warrants further attention.

PUPIL PROFILE

Gender.

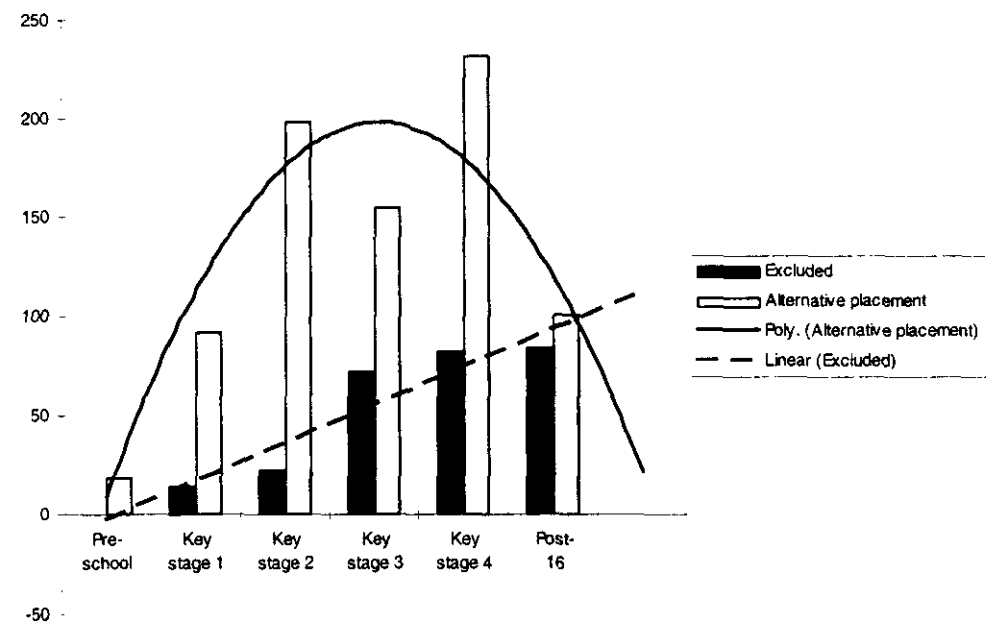
The gender ratio of pupils permanently excluded is 4:1 (male:female) and that of pupils transferring to alternative provision is 3:1. However, these ratios are distorted by the over-representation of boys. When the ratios are adjusted, as a percentage of the pupil population, they reduce to 2.5:1 & 2:1 respectively. It is

of interest that females are more highly represented in pupils transferring to alternative provision.

Age.

The distribution of permanently excluded pupils ranged from Key-Stage 1 to Post-16 but the majority of pupils were towards the upper end of this range. The mode was Key Stage 3 and 82% of exclusions related to pupils at, or above this age group. Pupils transferring to alternative provision tended to be younger (two pupils transferring during their pre-school years). The mode in this case was only Key Stage 2 and only 56% were at Key Stage 3 or above. This picture, however, is confused by the use of Key Stages. The variation in the number of pupils at each Key Stage can best be addressed by calculating the proportion of pupils at each stage:

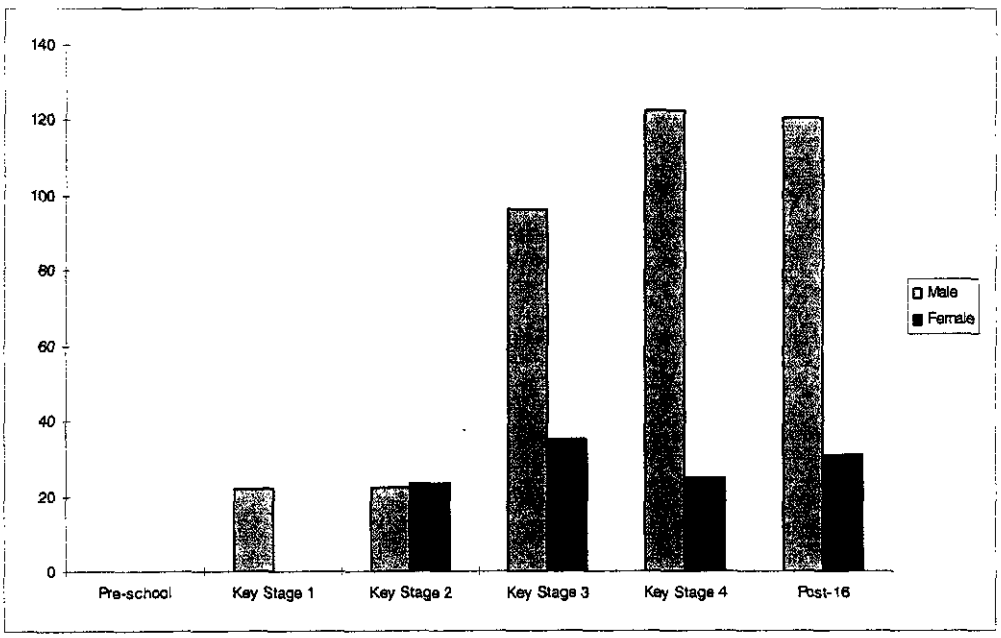
Figure 9.9. Graph showing the distribution of pupils permanently excluded or placed in alternative placement per10,000 pupils (n=207).



Note: The lines denote the trend lines suggested by the data distribution

Adjusted in this way the graph suggests two distinct profiles. The proportion of pupils permanently excluded increases progressively with age. The proportion of the pupil population transferring to alternative provision is more normally distributed, with the highest proportion being between Key Stage 2-4.

Figure 9.10: Graph showing the distribution of permanently excluded pupils by gender and Key Stage per10,000 pupils (n=208).



The profile for exclusions also different for each gender. The rate for females is fairly constant between at 0.24-0.35% of the pupil population. This is similar to the male rate of 0.22-0.23% between Key Stagel & 2. However the male rate rises dramatically to 1.00-1.21% from Key Stage 3 onwards. The distribution in respect to a transfer to alternative provision failed to reflect a gender difference

Social Service Department Involvement.

Headteachers rated the level of social service involvement, relative to the rest of the school population, using a standardized five-point scale (Likert scaling). These were coded numerically from -2 to +2. Both the excluded pupils and those moving to alternative provision were perceived to have had more involvement than their peer group. The proportion of pupils in full-time care was also very similar. However those moving to alternative placement had most involvement and this was spread across all types of support (respite; weekly boarding & full-time care). Excluded pupils were less likely to receive respite care. However all of these differences were small and none were statistically significant.

OUTCOME

Headteachers were asked to categorize the main form of provision made for pupils in the first 6 months following the exclusion.

Figure 9.11: Table indicating the provision made for pupils in the six months after exclusion.

	Number	Percentage
At home with no educational support	17	21%
At home with some educational input	20	25%
Alternative day special school	11	14%
A residential special school	18	22%
Health or SSD facility (Day)	7	9%
Health or SSD facility (Residential)	8	10%
Total =	81	101%

Almost half of permanently excluded pupils were at home during the six months following exclusion. Moreover in almost half of these cases, the LEA provided no educational input, despite the pupil being subject to a Statement. A residential placement was arranged in approximately one third of the cases. Most of these were in residential schools but a non-educational placement was

made in some cases (where pupils were beyond the age of statutory schooling). Many of the other pupils may ultimately be placed residentially, although this conclusion cannot be drawn from the data.

Some pupils were placed in alternative day special schools. The remaining pupils left the education system to attend day adult placements. Overall therefore, permanent exclusion lead to the responsibility of approximately one fifth of these young people transferring from the LEA to other local authority service (either Health or Social Services).

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Headteachers expressed their views on factors relating to the management of pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour by rating items[19] and in an open-ended format.

Figure 9.12: Table indicating the average ratings given to statements relating to the management of behaviour (n =224).

Limited availability of physical space (i.e. rooms) presents significant problems in successfully meeting their needs.	1.43 *(320)*
Where parents have difficulty in maintaining acceptable boundaries of behaviour the school can do little to resolve the behavioural needs of the pupil.	0.92 *(206)*
Staff are reluctant to tolerate the physical demands of managing large pupils presenting challenging behaviour.	0.71 *(160)*
An inability to bring about a change in the pupils behaviour rapidly erodes the confidence of staff.	0.54 *(120)*
Once the confidence of staff to manage the pupil has been eroded it is almost impossible for the child to continue at the school.	0.46 *(104)*
Integrating pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) within the school has complicated the schools ability to manage pupils presenting challenging behaviour.	0.35 *(79)*
The National Curriculum has made it more difficult to meet the needs of pupils presenting challenging behaviour.	0.21 *(48)*

Note: Raw totals are shown in brackets.

[19] Using the Likert format described earlier

Many of these were the converse of points, made in relation to exclusion and will be discussed in that context. This was particularly evident in respect to the requirement to provide a safe environment; staffing levels; staff confidence; the impact on other pupils and the need for consistency in the intervention. Echoing earlier discussion responses also highlighted the difficulties of providing for the educational needs of an increasingly heterogeneous pupil population. There were several additional points:

- **Physical space.** The availability of rooms and physical space was perceived to be a key factor when meeting the needs of pupils presenting challenging behaviour. Space enables the pupil to be withdrawn to a "*safe haven*" or facilitates the separation of pupils who do not mix well. The vulnerability of some pupils can also be safeguarded through the use of space. Restricted space limits the school's ability to reorganize teaching arrangement. [20]
- **Parental support.** The level of support parents/carers were able to give to the intervention was ranked second in order of importance. The level of support parents received from the Social Service Department (often in the form of respite care) was also linked to their ability to provide support.
- **National curriculum.** There was little support for the suggestion that the National Curriculum had made it more difficult to meet the needs of these pupils. Headteachers felt there was sufficient flexibility, in requirements, to be able to respond appropriately to behavioural needs.
- **PMLD pupils.** There was little support for the notion that integration of pupils with PMLD had complicated arrangements, although this is contradicted in other findings.

ISSUES UNDERPINNING PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS

Headteacher's views on permanent exclusion, were assessed in a similar way and responses in the two data sets show consistent features.

A minority of schools (6%, n=13) refused to accept the premise that they might ever consider making a permanent exclusion. Although the number is small, such views were against the direction of questioning and the level of support for these views may have been higher. Some schools emphasized that they were opposed to the concept of exclusion and would only considered it as a last resort (if at all):

> *"Our philosophy reflects a commitment to inclusion and we work hard to avoid exclusion".*

However, in expanding on the issues that might cause them difficulty many of the points reflected those made by other schools. In contrast to mainstream schools, respondents deemed the role of exclusion in supporting good order and discipline, to be irrelevant.

FACTOR ANALYSIS

The ratings Headteachers gave to the statements in section 7 & 8 of the questionnaire were subjected to a factor analysis in order to explore latent variables (i.e. underlying themes) in the responses. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (version 10.1 for windows) software was used in this analysis. Inspection of the correlation matrix calculations indicated that this data was suitable for such an analysis (Kinnear and Gray, 1999). The determinant of the matrix was above 0.00001 (determinant = 0.00034), the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was high at 0.831 and the Bartlett Test of

[20] This was the only item to have an average rating in the "very significant" range but was reflected in only 7% (n=16) of written responses.

sphericity was significant (Chi-square = 1552.93, p<0.00001). A scree plot was formed from the initial principal component analysis. There was a discrepancy in the steepness of the curve at three factors, suggesting this was the optimum number of components for explaining this data.

Figure 9.13: Table indicating the average ratings given to statements exploring issues that might prompt a permanent exclusion (n =224).

To protect other pupils in the school from physical harm.	1.78 (398)
To protect the physical well being of staff.	1.45 (324)
To facilitate the school being able to meet the educational needs of the other pupils.	1.33 (297)
To protect the emotional well being of staff.	1.14 (256)
To secure a transfer to a more specialist provision (e.g. a residential special school).	1.04 (233)
To enable the child to receive a curriculum more suited to his/her needs	0.88 (196)
To force the LEA to provide the additional resourcing.	0.81 (182)
To alleviate the anxiety expressed by the parents of other pupils.	0.76 (170)
To resolve the inability of agencies (Health, Social Services & Education) to provide an appropriately integrated package of care for the child.	0.59 (133)
To overcome the failure of the LEA to respond more rapidly to the needs of the school.	0.51 (115)
To secure an early adult placement (e.g. the child being considered to have grown out of school).	0.39 (88)
To break the deadlock associated with inadequate levels of support to meet home needs (e.g. respite provision).	0.39 (88)
To secure better guidance or advice on behaviour management.	0.38 (86)
To overcome the bureaucratic obstacles to placing pupils residentially.	0.37 (82)
To place pressure on the child's parents to support the school's intervention strategy more effectively.	-0.01 (-2)
To maintain authority over pupils in order to prevent a wider breach of discipline.	-0.69 (-155)

Consequently three factors were extracted from the correlation matrix, using principal component analysis and rotation using the varimax procedure (with Kaiser normalization) to aid interpretation. The integrity of the results is

supported by the rotation converging within only six iterations (see Appendix E).

Inspection of the correlation matrix indicated that it presented a good model for the data. Factor 1 (10 statements) constituted 22.6% of the variance; Factor 2 (6 statements) accounted for 11.3% of the variance and Factor 3 (3 statements) constituted 7.8% of the variance. To clarify the relationship between variables and factors, a loading of 0.4 was set as a minimum level for statements to be considered to contribute to a factor.

In reflecting on these results it is important to consider what is meant by statistical significance. As noted earlier, many authorities (e.g. Barlow et al., 1984) question the value of the concept. Fundamentally statistical significance does not equate with an everyday understanding of the term and should not be confused in this way. It is a mathematical construct, which identifies that an association, is unlikely to be attributable to chance factors. Whilst these factors may be statistically valid the issue is whether they help to organize the data in a meaningful ways. I would argue that they do and propose to use this analysis to discuss the responses.

Factor 1 - Breaking A Deadlock

Many issues felt to be critical in addressing a pupil's behaviour, lie outside of a Headteachers locus of control. Statements in Factor 1 acknowledge the role exclusion might play in exerting pressure on others, to act in ways the school perceives to be necessary, thus forcing a change in the status quo. The range of issues are diverse but can be summarized as breaking the deadlock over resourcing (including those relating to the needs of the family), mobilization of support for the intervention (including that of parents) or to promote the movement of the pupil to another provision.

Figure 9.14: Results of the factor analysis of Headteacher responses to sections 7 & 8 of the questionnaire.

	Factor loading		
Statements	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
To break the deadlock associated with inadequate levels of support to meet home needs (e.g. respite provision).	0.809		
To force the LEA to provide the additional resourcing.	0.735		
To overcome the failure of the LEA to respond more rapidly to the needs of the school	0.730		
To resolve the inability of agencies (Health, Social Services & Education) to provide an appropriately integrated package of care for the child.	0.723		
To overcome the bureaucratic obstacles to placing pupils residentially	0.723		
To secure better guidance or advice on behaviour management.	0.699		
To place pressure on the child's parents to support the school's intervention strategy more effectively.	*0.681*		
To secure an early adult placement (e.g. the child being considered to have grown out of school).	0.590		
To secure a transfer to a more specialist provision (e.g. a residential special school).	0.532		
To maintain authority over pupils in order to prevent a wider breach of discipline.	0.474		
To protect the emotional well being of staff.		0.621	
To protect the physical well being of staff.		0.584	
To protect other pupils in the school from physical harm.		0.555	
Integrating pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) within the school has complicated the schools ability to manage pupils presenting challenging behaviour.		0.482	
To alleviate the anxiety expressed by parents of other pupils		0.467	
To facilitate the school being able to meet the educational needs of the other pupils.		0.407	
An inability to bring about a change in the pupils behaviour rapidly erodes the confidence of staff.			0.721
Staff are reluctant to tolerate the physical demands of managing large pupils presenting challenging behaviour.			0.708
Once the confidence of staff to manage the pupil has been eroded it is almost impossible for the child to continue at the school			0.513
The National Curriculum has made it more difficult to meet the needs of pupils presenting challenging behaviour.	*		
Limited availability of physical space (i.e. rooms) presents significant problems in successfully meeting their needs.	*		
Where parents have difficulty in maintaining acceptable boundaries of behaviour the school can do little to resolve the behavioural needs of the pupil	*		
To enable the child to receive a curriculum more suited to his/her needs	** 0.423	0.447	

* Excluded after the analysis as too weakly loaded (<0.4) to any of the factors
**Excluded after the analysis as loaded with equal strength to two factors.

Appropriateness Of Placement

Items relating to a transfer to a more specialist provision (ranked 5th in the ratings given to statements relating to permanent exclusion, see Figure 9.13) and accessing a curriculum more suited to his/her needs (ranked 6th), relate to concerns about whether an alternative placement might provide more appropriately for the needs of the child. Headteachers are able to pursue such arguments through other means and exclusion would present an extreme method of forcing their views. The item relating to "*forcing the LEA's hand*", would seem consistent with this theme but appears less prominently in the rankings (13th). A key difference is the pupil-centred sentiments underpinning the higher order items.

There were similar points in the open-ended section. Statements relating to "*concerns about educational need of the pupil exhibiting the challenging behaviour*" were given in 15% (n=34) of the responses. Many of the comments suggested a dilemma around maintaining the pupil on roll, and whether this would be in his/her long-term interest. Some responses queried the concept of what EDUCATION means, in respect to pupils presenting challenging behaviour. Given that school is primarily viewed to be a medium for learning, the fact that the pupil is absorbing high levels of staff attention, yet is not making academic progress is difficult to reconcile, irrespective of improvements in their behaviour. More pressure arises where the behaviour is deteriorating or the child is exhibiting signs of distress.

Statementing relating to "*concerns about the appropriateness of the placement*" were registered in 14% (n=31) of the responses. A common point was whether "*it is in his/her best interest to be here?*" Headteachers indicated that they might consider permanent exclusion if they felt the school did not have the skills and facilities to meet the pupil's needs. Again the rationale was pupil focused, in that it would promote his/her placement somewhere more appropriate. In some

cases the wording suggested the current placement was actually preventing placement in a more appropriate context, and consequently could be viewed as detrimental to their needs. There were particular concerns around practices that could be considered as "*containment*". This is particularly the case where a pupil's behaviour frequently causes the child to be isolated from the rest of their peer group. Issues as to what advantages Headteachers perceive a residential school might offer, is related and discussed later.

These concerns may be more extreme where a pupil was felt to have been placed inappropriately in the first instance. That such responses are evoked in relation to questions about exclusion also imply that there may be differences in opinion, between the LEA and school, about the appropriateness of the placement.

Lack Of Resources

The use of exclusion to secure additional resources ranked 7th in the overall ratings. Approximately 29% (n=64) of open-ended responses identified resource issues. Again a number of Headteachers indicated that the availability of resources within the school would have a bearing on the decision to exclude. A key consideration was whether the school had the level of staffing necessary to manage the behaviour safely. Most schools looked to the LEA to ensure the cost of such staffing was met.

Pressure On Local Authority Services

Lower in the rankings, were a collection of statements relating to the use of the exclusion to force other services to take actions to help resolve the problems. The written comments also supported this. Managing behaviour has implications across a range of contexts and involves Social Services, Health and Education. Some of the pressure was directed towards facilitating a better-integrated package of care. Far from using exclusion as a sanction against

parents, it was often perceived to be supportive in helping them achieve a better package of support. As one Headteacher expressed it:

> *"To force the issue with the LEA or other agencies but only if we felt that other avenues had been exhausted. I'd like to feel we were acting with parents and in support of them."*

Factor 2: Protection

Statements in Factor 2 relate to the more pragmatic need, to maintain a safe environment. They relate to the physical and emotional well being of staff and pupils. Concerns also extend to the problems of managing challenging pupils, in an environment in which there are physically vulnerable pupils. Lastly, there is an aspect that relates to the protection of the school as an institution and its ability to deliver a secure environment in which learning can take place.

The highest ratings were given to statements about the need to keep pupils (1st) and staff (2nd) safe. This concern also extended to the need to support the emotional well being of staff (4th) working with challenging pupils. Headteachers were unanimous about the importance of this issue. Only six of the responses fell at, or below zero in respect to the protection of pupils and only nineteen in respect to the protection of staff. This is an important issue for SLD schools.

The most frequently cited concern in the open-ended section of the survey was again the physical risk to other pupils (90%, n = 201) and to staff (83%, n = 187). Responses also indicated that these concerns rarely stemmed from one-off attacks. Difficulties had typically, been present over a considerable period of time. The behaviours were often felt to be unresponsive to the interventions being adopted and the issue was expressed as a Health & Safety issue (Health & Safety Act, 1972 section 2). Another issue in the written responses was the

danger pupils presented to their own safety and was cited in 26% (n=59) of the returns.

As well as physical safety, there were concerns about the emotional impact of working with pupils whose behaviour was challenging. The stress engendered by violence, and the practicalities of finding staff willing to work with such pupils, was mentioned. Despite being ranked 4th, these factors arose in only 2% (n=5) of the written responses.

Whilst most concerns related to the schools management of the behaviour, the statement ranked 8th acknowledged that the views of other parents also need to be accommodated and exert some pressure on Headteachers (reflected in only 2% of the written comments (n=5).

A different order of protection relates to the school as an organisation. There were concerns about the impact of a pupil's behaviour on the education of other pupils (ranked 3rd). Again the views of Headteachers were fairly consistent on this point. Clearly there is a dilemma for Headteachers between principles of inclusion, in respect to the pupil exhibiting the challenging behaviour, and the needs of other pupils in the school. A point may be reached where the needs of other pupils are felt to be seriously compromised by the continuing presence of the pupil. This dilemma is exacerbated where there is little evidence of improvement in the pupil's behaviour.

Factor 3: Staff Confidence

The number of statements relating to this Factor are small but form a coherent grouping. The underpinning theme is the relationship between the competence and confidence of staff, and their ability to maintain a viable intervention. Some staff experience working with challenging pupils to be difficult and threatening. The commitment of staff to work with such children was perceived to be associated with the level of training provided. Staff were also perceived to need

the support of colleagues and external agencies. The effect of not being able to bring about a change in the pupil's behaviour and increasing reluctance to place themselves in a situation likely to cause them physical injury was highlighted.

OLDER PUPILS

An explanation as to why exclusion was more common in older pupils, was provided in 159 questionnaires. Many of the issues reflected earlier comments. Responses were grouped in the following way:

Figure 9.15: Table of explanations for why exclusion tended to be more prevalent in older pupils (n=159).

Size & strength	138	86.79%
Appropriateness of curriculum arrangements	93	58.49%
It is not our problem anymore	16	10.06%
Intervention not effective	14	8.80%
Puberty and the increase in sexualized behaviour	11	4.87%
Transfer of pupils from other special schools	5	3.14%

Note: Some Headteachers registered more than one point.

Developing the theme of maintaining a safe environment, the majority of responses associated age with the size and strength of pupils. Physical interventions is more difficult and consequently, pupils present a greater threat. It was suggested that, as most staff in SLD schools are female, this issue may be more acute.

Again there were issues relating to the mix of pupils. The post-16 population often receive an influx of pupils from other types of special schools. Pupils with more complex needs, who are unable to transfer to FE provision, may be placed in SLD schools solely because such schools constitute the only LEA provision for pupils aged 16 - 19 years.

In addition, much of the Post-16 curriculum is focused on life skills, with an emphasis on community access. Managing pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour in an off-site unit or community context is more difficult. Whilst staff might wish to keep such pupils on the main school site, this is not easily accommodated because of the competing needs of other pupils. Staff can consequently become over-stretched in supporting pupils in the community, leaving insufficient staff to manage crises that occur.

Minority views included the following

- Age was equated with increased sexualized behaviour.
- Behavioural challenges have often been present for a number of years. Schools are consequently more inclined to question what they are hoping to achieve.
- The obligation to provide education is more ambiguous for the 16-19 age group. Pupils are beyond the age of statutory school. Whilst there is an entitlement to education, there is the possibility of this being provided elsewhere. They do not need to be in a school, particularly if they are finding the experience difficult or stressful. Such views start to destabilize commitment to the pupils needs.

PERCEIVED TREND IN PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS.

Approximately a quarter of Headteachers (22%, n=226) perceived there to have been an increase in exclusions. As might be anticipated, there was an overlap between the reasons given for this, and those given for the perceived increase in challenging behaviour. Only thirty-four Headteachers offered an explanation for their views.

Concerns about the increase in heterogeneity of the school population were again common. Some Headteachers felt that the level of funding, provided by the LEA, had been eroded and was making it increasingly difficult to meet the needs of some pupils. Where additional staffing was forthcoming it was often in

Figure 9.16: Headteacher explanations for why they perceived exclusion from SLD schools to be increasing (n=34).

Increase complexity of school population	20	58.82%
Availability of resources.	9	26.47%
Additional legislation	8	23.53%

the form of additional LSA time. As LEAs were more stringent about staying within financial limits, negotiations over this issue often reached an "en passé". As one Headteacher expressed it:

> "*Schools/LEA's do not have the funding for extra staff LMSS has a lot to answer for. There is no room for negotiation*".

A minority of Headteachers felt that increased legislation, in respect to physical management, made staff feel more vulnerable to the threat of prosecution.

RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT

Headteachers responses to the statements relating to the use of residential provision were mildly supportive of both, despite the apparent contradiction. However the written elaboration helps to explain this anomaly.

Given the need for some pupils to be in residential care, Headteachers (almost unanimously) felt that such facilities should be available locally. Such arrangements were felt to facilitate access to parents and their local community, as well as enabling them to be more easily reintegrated as circumstances changed. Many responses expressed frustration, that such issues had not been properly addressed. Contrary to expectations, the principle of "*keeping children with their parents wherever possible*", was frequently perceived to be an obstacle to the development of such services. One Headteacher expressed it in the following way:

"I cannot fathom the reluctance of the LEA to get moving and do it, rather than wasting thousands of pounds on sending children out-county, nor is it acceptable to adopt a rigid high moral stance about children always having to live with their family if this is clearly impossible".

Figure 9.17: Average ratings given by Headteacher to statements about residential education. (n = 224)

Statement	*Average rating*
The needs of all pupils could be met locally if adequate resources were made available.	1.1
There will always be some children for whom a residential placement presents the best option	1.3

Funding residential school placements can be argued to be a response to a statutory requirement but enhancing the local infrastructure involves a more complex rationale. Some Headteachers expressed frustration over such reactive arguments and felt that a more strategic response might ultimately prove to be a more efficient use of local authority resources.

Figure 9.18: Table indicating the reasons Headteacher's felt pupils might require a residential school placement (n=73).

Lack of any local residential child care provision	72	98.63%
Staffing levels	66	90.42%
Impact of behaviour on families	64	87.67%
Need for structure and consistency	48	65.75%
Specialist services	14	19.17%
Homogeneity of grouping	10	13.70%
Cost of residential	10	13.70%

Note: Some Headteachers identified more than one aspect.

Whilst many schools agreed with the premises that pupils could be kept locally, if adequate resources were available, they doubted this would ever be realized. Local authority resources were perceived to be susceptible to financial cutbacks. Resourcing would need to address buildings, training and advice. It would also require a comprehensive package of care that addressed the needs of the child across a number of contexts. This could only be achieved through better corporate planning.

Services were currently perceived to be over-compartmentalized, offering a fragmented response. The primary need for a residential placement was often unrelated to education. Pupils who present challenging behaviours, can have a significant impact on the quality of life of family members. The level of respite care can alleviate this, yet such provision is not consistently available. The stress on families has implications for the ability of parents to support behaviour intervention programmes. This in turn has implications for the behaviour of the pupil within a school. From a Headteacher perspective what constitutes "*acting in the child's best interest*" becomes confused in such a scenario.

A key theme was the need for structure and consistency in the intervention. Comments suggest that some families were unable to support the pupil in this way. Even where services are fully engaged, the number of people involved, can cause the approach to become fragmented. One of the advantages in placing a pupil residentially is the consistency of care it may provide ("*24hr curriculum*"). Staffing levels in residential schools tend to be high and staff are responsible to one organisation (a single point of delivery), as opposed to the fragmented arrangements within the local community.

> *"It can be extremely difficult for a family to follow through a highly structured behaviour programme. For some pupils this can best be achieved within a 24 hour educational environment with a high staffing level, all working to one goal/target."*

A further advantage attributed to residential schools was access to "*specialist*" services and an ability to provide a more therapeutic regime. The nature of these services however was not specified. Some responses suggested that the LEA was increasingly reluctant to commit the funding necessary to secure an independent residential school placement. Consequently pressure is placed on schools to keep the pupils on roll beyond the point at which this is a viable proposition.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

An analysis of the data was conducted to explore the relationship between variables. As exclusions are infrequent, in a number of analyses, exclusion needed to be regarded as a dichotomous variable (i.e. schools which had or had not excluded). The following were highlighted as being of interest (more detailed data is provided in Appendix E):

1. **Pearson Correlation.** Results of statistical analyses need to be viewed with caution, as there will always be some relationship between variables. Whilst large samples increase the confidence with which findings can be generalized, they also increase the sensitivity of tests of difference (Robson, 1998). Consequently trivial relationships can be statistically significant. With the data from this survey, correlations as low as 0.190 reached a 0.01 level of significance, yet such associations remain extremely weak. Whilst a correlation of $r = 0.5$ is moderately high, it merely signifies that there is 25% shared variance. For this reason correlations below $r = 0.50$ or those having a significance level greater than 0.01 were discounted (the two criterion being interrelated via sample size – Brookes and Dicks, 1969, 2nd edn).

   There was no direct correlation between whether a school had excluded, and any other variable. The failure to identify a significant correlation between exclusion and basic school data discounts such a simplistic relationship. Nor

is this surprising as it is likely that a permanent exclusion would result only where a variety of circumstances co-existed. The nature of the survey also needs to be born in mind. The bulk of the questionnaire related to Headteacher views and perceptions. This raises the issue of the relationship between attitudes, belief and behaviour. That there is a tenuous linkage between responses to statements about views, and actual behaviours might have been anticipated (Hanson, 1980).

All of the correlations meeting the specified criteria[21] related to the ratings given to statements about exclusion. These were best addressed in the factor analysis. They do, however, suggest that Headteachers rated items in a consistent manner[22].

2. **Chi-squared**. Chi-squared calculations were also made on relevant variables. Results that were both significant at the 0.001 levels and had a Phi value greater than 0.3, all related to judgements about the local authority context (see Appendix E for statistical details).

Figure 9.19: Table illustrating the Chi-squared analyses of the relationships between Headteacher views of joint funding arrangements and both the quality of collaboration between local authority services and the quality of support provided to parents.

Joint funding & Local collaboration

		Poor local collaboration	Good local collaboration	Total
Poor joint funding	Count	128	29	157
	Expected Count	*114.0*	*43.0*	*157.0*
Good joint funding	Count	23	28	51
	Expected Count	*37.0*	*14.0*	*51.0*
Total	Count	151	57	208
	Expected Count	*151.0*	*57.0*	*208.0*

[21] See Figure E.2.

[22] For example, the correlation between ratings about the physical and emotional well being of staff registered at r = 0.583).

Joint funding & Support to parents

		Poor support to parents	Good support to parents	Total
Poor joint funding	Count	145	12	157
	Expected Count	*134.4*	*22.6*	*157.0*
Good joint funding	Count	33	18	51
	Expected Count	*43.6*	*7.4*	*51.0*
Total	Count	178	30	208
	Expected Count	*178.0*	*30.0*	*208.0*

These results indicate that those local authorities judged to be poor (or good) at joint funding arrangements were equally judged to be poor (or good) both at inter-service collaboration and in providing services to support parents. Whilst this provides evidence of the uniformity with which Headteachers perceive local services, there was no direct linkage between these variables and exclusion.

3. **T-test.** An independent sample t-test was used to compare the relationship between schools that had excluded a pupil over the past five years and the estimated percentage of PMLD pupils on roll. In this analysis the Levene test for equality of variance was <0.05, suggesting that an assumption of equal variance in both groups, was valid. The t-test score of 2.062 and confidence interval of the difference indicates a significant difference, between the mean scores (two tailed level of significance = 0.041). The mean estimated percentage of PMLD pupils in schools that had excluded a pupil was 26.1% and in schools that had not excluded a pupil it was 31.1% (to 3 significant figures). Again, however, an estimate of the effect size [23] suggests that whilst significant, the strength of the relationship is very weak (approximately 0.4). The relationship between these factors is consequently tentative and needs to be treated with caution.

[23] Mean difference/average standard deviation.

These findings suggest that schools, which have a higher proportion of PMLD pupils on roll, are less likely to permanently exclude. Any explanation of this however, also needs to accommodate the fact that no significant relationship was found between the estimated percentage of challenging pupils and permanent exclusion. It seems logical to assume that as the percentage of PMLD pupils increases, there is a corresponding decrease in the percentage of physically able pupils. It is also conceivable that the types of challenge presented by PMLD pupils are qualitatively different from those posed by the rest of the school (e.g. stereotypical and self-injurious behaviours as opposed to violent behaviours threatening the safety of others). If this hypothesis were valid it suggests that schools, which have a high proportion of PMLD pupils, might still have a high percentage of challenging pupils but the nature of the challenges may be less likely to be associated with exclusion. One of the limitations in developing this argument further is the lack of data on how Headteachers' have estimated the percentage of challenging behaviour in their school.

Figure 9.20: Table illustrating the Chi-squared analysis of the relationships between schools that had either excluded a pupil or had one transfer to alternative provision and schools in which PMLD pupils had been integrated into the main body of the school.

		PMLD pupils not integrated	PMLD pupils integrated	Total
No pupils excluded or placed in alternative provision	Count *Expected Count*	28 *21.6*	40 *46.4*	68 *68.0*
Pupils excluded or placed in alternative provision	Count *Expected Count*	38 *44.4*	102 *95.6*	140 *140.0*
Total	Count *Expected Count*	66 *66.0*	142 *142.0*	208 *208.0*

Building on the PMLD theme, it was of interest to note that there was also a Chi-squared relationship ($p < 0.05$) between schools, which had either excluded a pupil or had one transfer to alternative provision over the past five years and those in which PMLD pupils were currently being integrated into the main body of the school[24]. However the nominal symmetric measure (Phi = 0.141) cautions that this relationship is extremely weak. Consequently the significance of this relationship needs to be treated with caution. Moreover, such views were not reflected in the written comments and were not given much credence in the interviews. Although each of these results are of little interest when viewed in isolation, it is the fact that permanent exclusion was linked to PMLD pupils in both of these analyses that adds to the interest of these findings.

[24] See Figure 9.20 for statistical details.

10 ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

CHANGES IN SCHOOL POPULATION.

Interviewees perceived there to have been a shift in the type of pupil on roll. They felt that more able pupils were either attending MLD or mainstream schools. The decrease in pupils with Downs Syndrome was cited as a distinctive feature of this change. They also felt that there had been an increase in the number of pupils with PMLD. This was attributed to medical advances, decreasing infant mortality.

> *".... we've recently had to pipe oxygen into a classroom in order to maintain a child in the school and that's something we've never had to do before."*

Some pupils transferred from MLD to SLD schools but these tended to be pupils with more complex needs who could not be easily accommodated in MLD schools. The favorable staff:pupil ratios in SLD schools were often perceived to be an attraction. It was acknowledged that there had always been a significant proportion of ASD pupils attending SLD schools. However there was some uncertainty about whether the increased profile marked a greater awareness of ASD, an improvement in diagnostic practice or an increase in the number of children concerned.

> *"10-15 years ago an SLD school like this had a .. majority of .. pupils .. with Downs syndrome... 50% of our pupils now appear on the autistic spectrum."*

Qualitative differences in the behaviour presented by these pupils were also commented upon. The level of intentionality attributed to behaviour was a distinguishing feature and Headteachers perceived them to require a different approach to that developed for the SLD population.

Whilst the composition of pupils attending SLD schools across the country, is likely to be similar it was evident that local factors can cause the proportion of some groups to be skewed. Schools may have developed facilities, which attracted pupils with particular needs (e.g. ASD). Schools perceived as being competent in managing behavioural challenges also tended to attract pupils of this type. A further factor was the existence of specialist residential homes that attracted particular groups of pupils into the locality. There are, consequently, dangers in trying to comparing the exclusion data between schools.

The population characteristics were also perceived to vary between year groups. Many SLD schools experienced an influx of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. This was due to doubts about the ability of some pupils to cope at secondary school (particularly those in mainstream placements). A further increase is commonly experienced at the end of Key Stage 4, as the SLD school was often the only special school provision catering for pupils post-16.

QUALITY OF CHALLENGES.

In all these interviews, permanent exclusion had been prompted by the perceived threat a pupil presented to the safety of staff, or pupils. All other factors were subservient to this issue and were relevant only in the impact they had for the management of such behaviour. This was typically expressed as a "*Health & Safety issue*". The term physical violence is used to describe a wide range of behaviours and qualitative aspects are difficult to encapsulate. However, the severity of the incidents experienced by these schools needs to be fully appreciated. Concerns were often triggered by specific but traumatic incidents that served to highlight the risk the child presented.

> *"He threatened pupils with a ... carving knife that he brought in from home and an iron bar that he'd found.....it was no longer safe and I would have been irresponsible to try and keep him in school, ... They had taken kickings and punches and scratchings and bites."*

Staff and other pupils had often been injured in attacks. Whilst attacks on staff were not considered acceptable they were more common, and to some extent, acknowledged to be part of the job. The main concern was violence directed towards other pupils. Anxiety about the reactions of parents was acknowledged to be a complication but interviewees felt that such concerns could normally be resolved via discussion. To this extent parental pressure was secondary and not felt to contribute significantly to the decision to exclude. Self-injurious behaviour did not constitute the reason for exclusion in any of the cases discussed.

In most cases the violence was associated with a range of other behaviours. These would have presented a legitimate source of concern in any other school setting but were generally perceived as troublesome rather than a reason to exclude. Repeated damage to property was a case in point. It is possible that such behaviours are more common in SLD schools but it also serves to signify the level of tolerance in these schools.

> *"You can usually cope with damage to equipment, ... your library shelves are cleared on a daily basis and you can always rebuild at the end of the day"*

Violence targeting the public, was taken seriously and typically managed by allocating additional staff or placing restrictions on community access. Whilst particularly violent incidents tend to raise queries relating to placement, in none of these cases was an exclusion made in response to an isolated incident. Schools had typically been managing significant levels of difficult behaviour

over a number of years. In one case, behavioural difficulties had been noted when the child first attended the nursery, although she was ultimately excluded only in Key Stage 3.

The LEA and parents were briefed regularly on developments, often through the Annual Review. In some cases partial attendance and/or fixed term or informal exclusions preceded the permanent exclusion. Moreover parents, who sympathized with the plight of the school, typically supported such actions. For instance, pupils might be kept home during difficult times in the school calendar (e.g. sports day) or to accommodate problems associated with changes in their medication.

The school ethos was child-centred and supportive considerable tolerance, being displayed in response to extreme behaviours. In all cases special arrangements had been set in place to address the problems. Such arrangements typically involved changes of class and the relocation of staff. Special facilities (e.g. soft-playrooms), which had previously been accessed by the whole school, were often commandeered to support the pupil's management. In addition Headteachers were often directly involved in support arrangements.

> "..... *they may end up out of the classroom situation being taught separately by one or even two adults and when that breaks down as well, they end up sitting in here with me ... or* (my) *supervising them with other staff in the soft playroom.*"

Health & Safety issues were addressed through risk assessment procedures that often lead to the allocation of additional staff, at key times of the day. In some cases mobile phones or panic buttons were provided, to enable staff to call for assistance. Most of the schools had provided restraint training to staff, either in, response to the child concerned, or to meet more general concerns. Behavioural challenges were a necessary condition but the decisions to permanently exclude,

tended to result from a combination of factors, including the perceived interest of the child:

> "*The head's role is always difficult because of the requirement to weigh competing needs. You have responsibility for the well being of staff, other children, and you have responsibility for the child exhibiting behavioural difficulties*"

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Staffing

A basic requirement in managing behavioural challenges, is adequate staffing. In all of the interviews a minimum of one-to-one support was provided, prior to the exclusion. Enhanced staffing enabled schools to provide a more individualized programme, and facilitated the schools ability to respond flexibly to problems that arose. In most cases, staff accompanied the pupil wherever they went, in order to maintain safety and ensure other pupils were not attacked. Despite 2:1 support from staff, some pupils still presented a threat to others.

> "*Even with two assistants on either side, she would attack them....*"

Whilst the cost of such staffing may initially need to be met by the school, Headteachers experienced little difficulty in securing LEA funding for resources of this type. Often however, there was a delay whilst the school secured the evidence to support their request. Superficially, the ease with which schools can secure additional staffing implies that LEAs are supportive. Whilst this may be the case, it was not always perceived altruistically.

> "*Staffing is not the issue. It's a lot cheaper for an authority to give you additional staffing to maintain a child's placement in school than it is to pay for an out-county placement.*"

In a number of instances it was portrayed as a cheap and cynical evasion of the LEAs responsibility to meet the needs of the child in a residential placement. Such responses were felt to be financially motivated. Whilst this arose prior to exclusion it could also be reflected in decisions following the exclusion.

> *"I was very angry that that was the response, because I think all it did was save the authority thousands. How they managed him was by giving him 2:1 ..... I feel angry that the authority have let him down."*

In the majority of cases enhanced staffing was in the form of LSA support. Whilst Headteacher's acknowledged the competence many LSAs possessed, this could not be guaranteed, particularly when appointments were made at short notice. Such reactive arrangements also meant that school were unable to secure, develop and retain staff with the appropriate levels of skills and expertise.

> *"The LEAs see the SLD school as .... the last line of defence, and often will put unjustified levels of resources in there to maintain a child in education, and sometimes it doesn't matter how much resourcing you put in ....."*

Non-segregation

The preference of interviewees was to support pupils exhibiting behavioural challenges, in their normal class groups. Segregated classes were viewed as an outmoded model that could be degrading to pupils and staff. Working as a school team, was felt to hold the advantage of creating shared responsibility, in which positive attitudes could be fostered. Skills in managing such pupils were needed throughout the school, and might ultimately benefit other pupils. Whilst there were difficulties in accommodating some pupils, this could be addressed through risk assessment.

One advantage of the "integration" model was the possibility of rotating the staff working with the child. This enabled the load to be shared, provided staff (and the pupil) with an element of respite and might help overcome inter-personal tensions.

LEAs often allocate the pupil one-to-one support. Whilst additional staffing is often required, designating it in this way suggests a model of support that conflicts with the approach above. Headteachers felt that one-to-one staffing lead to a "*minder*" mentality, with the pupil becoming over-dependent on such support.

Staff Confidence

Managing challenging behaviour was not merely about the number of staff, but having staff with the emotional resources to stay committed to the task. Managing challenging behaviour can generate stress that may lead to staff absences and further compromise the functioning of the school.

> "*it reached crisis where first one teacher then another teacher was off with long term stress after physical injury, as a result of having him.*"

Not only does a school need additional resources, but at times the speed with which the LEA provide them, can also be critical to maintaining staff morale. Prevarication over whether such resources are justified, can delay the process, to a point where the situation becomes irrevocable. Once confidence has gone Headteachers suggested that there was little option but to move the pupil to another school. The anomaly of a pupil failing in one school and successfully transferring to another, was often explained in this way. The organisational arrangements within the school were also deemed to be important, common strategies involved "*spreading the load*" of more difficult pupils, between staff, or rotating the staff working with the pupil.

Physical Space

The availability of space within the school was identified as a key factor in managing behaviour. However, many SLD schools were originally designed as junior training centres. Not only is class space limited but many campuses are cramped. A high proportion of the schools had classes being accommodated in temporary buildings. Whilst large SLD schools may have greater flexibility in respect to the use of space, this does not inevitably follow. Space can be problematic in any setting. LEAs will inevitably look to place pupils in schools where space is available. Maintaining space is consequently, a continual battle and deliberate efforts need to be made to free parts of the school for this purpose.

> "*... the only option would be to actually put a portacabin in there. Get a crane, lift it over the school building, and put it in there, but then that stops the children playing football at lunch-times and sports club times. It's very difficult. ....*"

Post-16 Arrangements

Although pupils may stay on the school role, post-16 pupils are often catered for in off-site facilities. It provides the pupil with a break from the educational arrangements that they may have applied since the age of 2 years old and marks a new phase in their education (a transition between school and adult placement). However, it makes the management of behavioural challenges more difficult, and can enhance the level of risk. On the main school site there are large numbers of staff upon which to draw in an emergency. Providing assistance to an off-site facility, some distance away may be less practicable.

> "*.... there's nobody else to call on in an off-site unit, there's three people coping with the group on their own, and you know you're ten minutes journey away.*"

There are also sensitivities around dealing with such problems in a more public setting. Where the provision is situated on the campus of another school, it also raises the issue of managing challenges in a context for which other people are responsible. Some schools felt that they would look to retain such pupils on the main campus. However this is not a cost-free option as the pupils will increasingly be taught in classes out of phase with their age.

Integration Of PMLD

All of the Headteachers interviewed had integrated children with PMLD more fully within the main body of the school. This was acknowledged to complicate the management of behavioural challenges, because of the vulnerability of the pupils concerned.

> "*The fact that if you're in a wheelchair and someone is flailing their fists at you and you can't get away, there are Health & Safety issues around that.*"

Whilst acknowledging this dynamic, none of the schools perceived this to be a major problem. It might be accommodated by the deployment of additional staff or reorganisation of the curriculum, to ensure physical separation at key times.

Containment.

An important aspect in the decision making process, was the degree of control the school felt they had over the behaviour. The situation needed to be more constructive than merely containment. Staff must believe that the existing arrangements have the potential to resolve the problems (if not now, then in the

future). If this is not the case it raises anxieties about whether the school is acting in the best interest of the child, by continuing to have them on roll.

> *"a recognition that we are failing the youngster and that the placement was no longer in his interests or in the health and safety of us, as fundamental as that. But most importantly..... we're not meeting his needs."*

Behaviour for which the school can see no rationale, generate particular stress and underlines the powerlessness of the school to change, control or even predict its occurrence.

Competing Needs Of Other Pupils

There are inevitable tensions around meeting the needs of a pupil and meeting those of the rest of the school. Not only is there a duty of care to keep pupils safe, but an obligation to provide them with an environment conducive to learning. All the schools had adapted arrangements in response to the needs of the child concerned. To an extent these arrangements placed restrictions on other pupils. This raised questions about the appropriate balance, in respect to the competing needs of other pupils. There were also concerns about the indirect effect of the child's behaviour on the well being of other pupils. Part of this impact is the stress experienced. Whilst it was often possible to protect pupils from attacks, they may be experiencing the trauma of an unsettled environment.

> *"...tables were scooped together to make .. one big group to .. work together .. this child was sat one side and the rest of the children had moved their chairs so they were sat as far from him as possible ... I even ... had a child going in the loo and being sick because he was in a fright about it."*

Pressure On Families

In addition to the school-based intervention, Headteachers identified the need to provide support to parents. Pupils spend the majority of their time in the care of their parents. There are several implications. Firstly the child/young person can place considerable stress on the family. In a significant number of the cases, the child being supported by a single parent exacerbated this. Parents of children exhibiting behavioural challenges, tend to have difficulty in securing child minders. This can be particularly difficult for a single parent attempting to stay in employment. Secondly, some family dynamics were perceived to exacerbate the difficulties for the child. Difficulties in maintaining behavioural boundaries and inconsistency in management were cited. Typically parents were viewed as reinforcing difficulties by "*giving in*" to the demands being placed upon them, by the child. This may have been due to limited parenting skills. However many parents were aware of the implications, but had become worn down by the circumstance that this constituted their way of coping. Thus the amount of support supplied to families may have implications for their ability to respond.

Headteachers were committed to support parents. This was partially related to a feeling of solidarity with the plight of the parents but the motives were not necessarily altruistic. Parental support was perceived to be necessary to the schools ability to progress the intervention strategy. Without engineering a change in the status quo the school could envisage little chance of reducing the behavioural challenges being experienced. This was felt to be the position even where the school had a good relationship with the parents.

As the level of challenging behaviour increases, the number of people involved often increases but this often lead to a uncoordinated approach. Interagency collaboration was generally judged to be poor. Headteachers identified the need for a more responsive and better-integrated services to meet the needs of these

children and their families. Preventive arrangements were felt to be particularly difficult, and planning was synonymous with reactive arrangements. Departmental boundaries and defensiveness about budgets, also militated against a coordinated response. Even where agreement existed over what should be done, there were often tensions over what agency pays which element. Consequently identified needs are often left un-addressed, as responsibility remains ambiguous. Part of the frustration experienced by Headteachers was that many initial proposals, that had not been implemented, presented cheaper options to those the local authority was ultimately forced to make, when the situation broke down. Akin to arguments about care in the community, Headteachers were advancing the argument that the local authority had accepted the aims of child centered legislation and policies to maintain children within their local community, without establishing the necessary infrastructure to enable this to be done. Disputes over budget responsibility were felt to cause delays in implementation, particularly when seeking a residential placement.

It was also felt that there had been a decline in support services over recent years. Headteachers suggested that it was rare for the health service to be involved. This included a lack of attendance at multi-disciplinary meetings. Where the health service did become engaged it tended to be in response to a short-term exclusion.

> "*... each time I excluded (short-term) the health authority re-looked at their case... and got medical intervention involved. But without those partial exclusions the medical side would never come in. They've always sat on the fence.*"

Health service involvement tended to constitute a review of the child's medication. Headteachers were particularly concerned about the lack of recognition given to the mental health needs of pupils with a SLD. Occasionally

psychiatric support was forthcoming, although Headteachers perceived there to be a significant lack of such services.

Social workers were perceived to be sympathetic but were often too over-stretched to make a real contribution. This was exacerbated by a high turnover of staff. Consequently a number of cases were not actively allocated, contact was responded to on an emergency basis and tended to be managed by people unfamiliar with the case history.

> "*it's always dependent on the person on the other end still being there next week.....People are moved on and moved around or disappearing over the horizon never to be seen again doesn't help. There needs to be some sort of continuity.*"

In summary there was a perception that services were sympathetic but tended to offer reactive support. Whilst there was a belief in early proactive intervention this was rarely realized. The pressure on services was also significant enough to make a multi-disciplinary approach difficult to achieve.

Respite & Residential Care

Given the pressures on families, the level of support they received was perceived to be critical to whether they could effectively support the child or even whether he/she could continue to live at home.

Some Headteachers indicated that there had been some recent innovations. One local authority had established a "*take-a-break*" scheme whereby carers go into the child's home to support parents. There were also examples of social services purchasing support from independent providers. Overall however the amount of respite care across was judged to be woefully inadequate. Equally the allocation of support was not felt to be equitably distributed. Some young people were

excluded on grounds of their age, and more articulate parents were perceived to have an unfair advantage in securing access to such scarce resources.

Generally there were reservations about the ability of most respite units to support children exhibiting behavioral challenges. Some facilities were judged to contain the problems and others excluded children with more extreme levels of behaviour (presumably where parents were in most need of such services). A number of Headteachers confessed to being so frustrated by the situation, that they had explored informal possibilities for enhancing local respite services. The enthusiasm of direct care staff for such developments was not met with equal enthusiasm by budget holders. Whilst services will inevitably have their own priorities, such responses were often viewed as shortsighted, and inefficient. The difficulty was again viewed as the lack of a corporate perspective.

If the situation at home broke-down and social services were obliged to take the child into care there was no local provision for children with SLDs.

Independent Residential School Placements

Given the lack of local residential provision an independent residential school placement may be the only pragmatic solution. Headteachers suggested that these had been easier to obtain in the past. There was also a consensus, that there had been a hardening of attitudes against the use of independent residential school placements. It was also felt that most LEAs would seek to maintain pupils locally. Reasons for this included the dominance of inclusionist principals and concerns about the quality of provision in independent establishments. This had also been highlighted by high profile cases of abusive practices. Linked to this is the practical difficulty LEAs have, in monitoring the quality of placements. As such placements tend to be costly, they also represent

a long-term drain on resources, making it more difficult for LEAs to invest in local infrastructure.

Some Headteachers indicated that if the case for residential provision was proven, they were confident that the funding would be found. Concerns about funding may, however, have more subtle implications. One of the dilemmas is a shift in thinking about what would constitute adequate grounds for a residential placement. Whilst previously, the primary concern may have been to act in the best interest of the child, an increasing focus is on partitioning of responsibility between departments. In the majority of cases a residential placement is not demanded purely on educational grounds. It arises from a mixture of social and educational concerns. Consequently costs should be shared across departments, although few LEAs appear to have a policy clarifying the grounds on which a residential placement would be made. Given the nature of the problem, it is equally not an issue that the Statementing process has been designed to resolve. In most local authorities unless the LEA were obviously unable to meet the educational needs there would be an expectation that a residential placement would be made on a joint funded basis.

> "*you see the argument in the educational authority is that we can provide adequately for the education of those youngsters. We will contribute to the residential placement but we cannot take on the full costing of that, because we're meeting the child's education needs.*"

Headteachers suggested there had been a hardening of the LEA position in respect to joint funded placements purely on the basis of breakdown within the home. Increasingly pressure was being placed on social services to expand local residential provision.

The tensions between departments, around the funding of such placements, can leave the child's needs in limbo. However it is a practical issue for families and

those working with the child. Where the grounds for funding are unclear, it can delay the process of seeking a placement. This has been further compounded, in some local authorities, where there have been cuts to social services budgets. Irrespective of inter-departmental delays such placements are perceived to be difficult to find, particularly for some age groups and types of difficulties.

Role of residential school

A residential school placement was primarily perceived to be a mechanism for managing situations where the pupil was placing stress on the family placement. Placement requests were often initiated by parents, and mediated by the social service department. Raising the possibility of a residential placement, however, inevitably generates some erosion in the commitment of school staff. Despite this not being an educational issue, placement difficulties may also be pursued through the SEN tribunal.

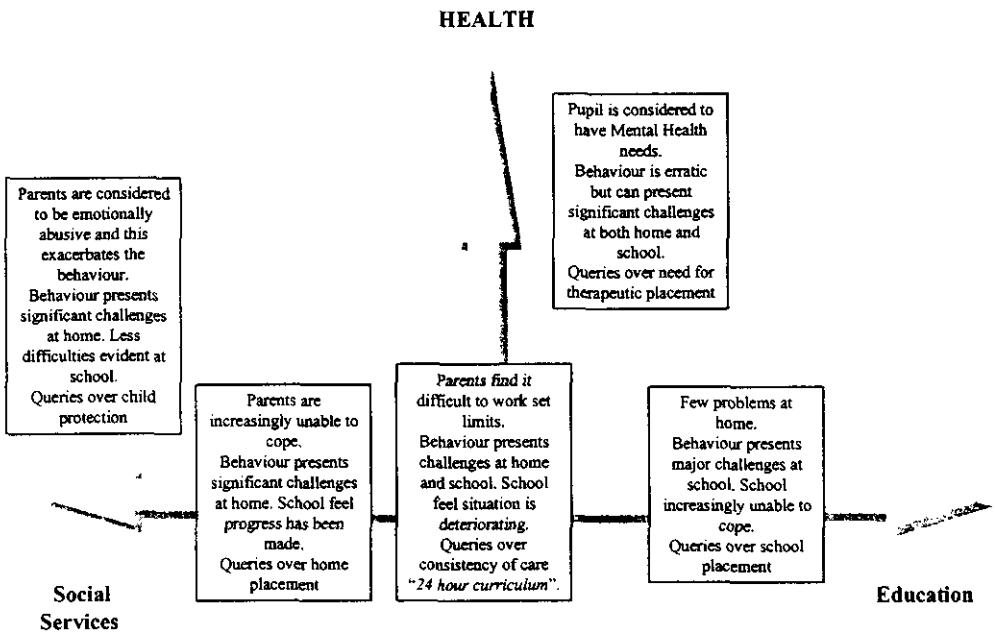
> "*.... its actually quite rare that its initiated by the school, ... it tends to be initiated by parents who are ceasing to cope at home.*"

Residential placements may present the best option for removing a child from a domestic situation that is viewed to exacerbate his/her behavioural problems. Consistency of approach is perceived to be a key criterion for the success of an intervention. Whilst a local children's home might meet the placement needs, many Headteachers felt that consistency of approach was less easily achieved through this mechanism. The concept of a 24-hour curriculum was often used as a shorthand way of describing this point.

> "*My view is that ...a well structured residential placement is very effective when its used properly. Because .... you get professional staff on a 24 hour basis that can ... offer continuity day and night.....*"

The argument that this is an educational need is compromised, as it overlaps with domestic factors. This concept of a "*24 hour curriculum*" is also confused by the term acting as a code for residential education. Such professional coding has also been reinforced by the perceived need to reframe the issue, in order to make the notion more acceptable to parents. Whether the need for such consistency is valid, is a different issue. In most cases, securing appropriate local arrangements presents obvious practical difficulties; the concept of a residential school remains safely abstract and untainted by reality. Some Headteachers were conscious of these factors and skeptical as to whether residential schools could actually deliver the consistency envisaged.

Figure 10.1: Diagram representing Headteacher views on possible cases for residential schooling and how these relate to agency responsibilities.



The notion of retaining children locally and providing a greater consistency of approach was often felt to be impracticable given current arrangements. Such views were founded on practical experience and knowledge of the personnel involved. One problem is that these children attract input from a diverse range of staff whose actions are difficult to co-ordinate. Not only might they hold

differing views on what should be done, but they also have distinct roles and are employed by separate agencies.

Embedded within the concept of consistency was a notion that behavioural challenges required the attention of a skilled team of staff. Such skills might relate to a more detailed understanding of behaviour modification techniques, together with practical experience of deploying them. Alternatively it can be supported by a view that the child required a therapeutic environment that was not always compatible with the academic focus expected of LEA schools.

> *"... he needed a therapeutic community rather than a purely educational community. I think there are a lot of issues that frankly educators do not have the skills to meet ..."*

Conversely some Headteachers queried what an independent residential school could actually provide. There were concerns that they may offer little more than a respite from pupils whose needs were difficult to accommodate. Above all most Headteachers regretted that the LEA had not established such provision locally.

> *"... (the) provision that this child would get was certainly no better and in many cases much worse than the provision he would get in a coordinated home school environment."*

EXCLUSION

The interviews reflected the survey finding that permanent exclusions are rare.

Comparison With Mainstream Schools

Research on exclusion from mainstream schools identified an association with perceived challenges to the authority of key figures within the school (e.g. Imich, 1994; Mitchell, 1996). It needs to be acknowledged that the dynamics in SLD schools are very different. Disciplinary considerations were viewed as both alien and irrelevant. One reason is the child-centred views about the nature of

behavioral challenges. Violence perpetrated by SLD pupils tended to be perceived as being without malicious intent and as a function of either the learning difficulties or intolerance to irritants within the environment.

> "... *pupils themselves never challenge Authority....99 times out of 100 its not a malicious or vindictive attack, it is just a response to a situation* ..."

Equally the combination of LMS and the market forces were not perceived to be relevant to SLD schools. Although special school data are featured in league tables, they do not have the same implication as they do for mainstream schools. There is a general acceptance that the measures being applied have little credibility as indicators of effectiveness within a special school context. Equally there are a limited number of such schools and access is controlled via the formal assessment procedure.

It was felt that the National Curriculum had the potential to skew the emphasis away from the curriculum needs of SLD children but whether this happened depend on the schools interpretation of such demands. There was sufficient flexibility within the statutory requirements to accommodate such concerns. Most schools welcomed the need to accommodate National Curriculum demands within their curriculum. It was viewed to have stimulated a constructive review of the curriculum that had broadened the range of approaches being adopted.

SPECIAL SCHOOL ISSUES

Child Centred Philosophy

Interviewees viewed the strength of their school as offering a flexible, child-centered approach to pupils presenting complex difficulties. They felt that behavioural challenges presented problems to be overcome and exclusion

merely transferred the problem elsewhere. This was also expressed through their anguish over not being able to find a better outcome for the child.

> *"It leaves a bitter taste in your mouth and an unsatisfactory taste when you feel you've left an issue that's unresolved."*

SLD schools were reluctant to contemplate permanent exclusion and were sensitive to the wider implications for both the child and the family. An issue for the child is the reputation they gain (*"writing the child's history"*). There was a concern that such *"history's"* tended to became elaborated over-time and serve to make future placements more difficult to secure. A permanent exclusion was consequently experienced as a traumatic event, leading to feelings of inadequacy, frustration and a sense of failure.

Headteachers also felt under increasing pressure not to exclude pupils. Permanent exclusion runs counter to current policy initiatives. However, it is never entered into lightly and ultimately the decision falls to the school and governors. Where staff were exposed to unacceptable levels of violence and all avenues for resolving the problem have been explored, there is need to change the status quo. Options for doing this are limited to the formal assessment procedure and exclusion. A change of placement would normally be mediated through the formal assessment procedure. A permanent exclusion consequently implies that something has gone wrong with these procedures.

Rate Of Deterioration

A permanent exclusion may simply be caused by the rate of deterioration and the subsequent increase in the frequency, duration or intensity of the challenges being exhibited. Some situations deteriorated so severely within the course of a day, that the police were asked to respond. The education system is often too inflexible to respond to such changes. Even calling a case conference at short notice may prove difficult.

> *"I think there is a danger that schools try and tough it out.....and then suddenly the thing will escalate. So it's a crisis which may have taken a while to build, it just gets to the point of no return and you've got to say enough is enough."*

Where the LEA agrees to make an alternative placement and the statutory procedures are initiated, such procedures can be lengthy and the difficulties experienced in school can overtake the paperwork and placement negotiations.

A further difficulty is that access to residential schools can prove difficult because of a shortage of such placements. Placement may only be viable after the school situation has broken down and the child is permanently excluded. In one case a child was out of school for 12 months, before the placement became available, despite active attempts to obtain one. Consequently even though an alternative placement has been agreed, the school may still exclude in order to terminate demands they feel are intolerable

Tensions Around Future Placement

The LEAs vacillation over the need for such placements can also exacerbate delays. Placement outside of the LEAs is likely to be expensive and officers may need to ensure that there are no viable and cheaper alternatives. From a school perspective, the alternative suggestions may appear inadequate and inappropriate, with control over the situation lying in the hands of officers with no direct experience of the child and no accountability for the practical problems being experienced within the school.

> *"you are pacified and left to cope or you know, a little bit more resource here, or we'll try this. And ultimately you know you're sticking plasters over something that needs a more radical solution."*

There can be significant delays whilst a placement is found, and negotiations over the relative partitioning of financial responsibilities, are conducted. This may leave the school in an impossible situation. Headteachers perceived administrators as having little appreciating of the difficulties being experienced:

> "*... as long as we were seen to be coping with him they weren't treating it as any kind of emergency or crisis.*"

Unwillingness To Accept Residential Placement

The need for a residential placement may be based on simple pragmatics for those working within the education system. Ergo the child is required to be in school, this school is unable to meet the child's needs, there is no alternative local placement, therefore placement must be made further afield, daily travel would not be possible, hence a residential school placement is required. A flaw in this reasoning is that it neglects the view of the parents. A difficulty encountered by some Headteachers was that parents, despite experiencing significant difficulties at home, might be opposed to their child living away from home.

> "*But now mum is saying but he's only 11. I don't want him to go away.....he's a statemented child, they have a legal obligation to meet his education need, and they're up a gum tree really.*"

Some parents viewed a residential placement as their "*giving up on the child*". They retained a basic belief that they could resolve the problems, given sufficient time. Clearly the emotional relationships between children and parents/guardians are complex and there can be a mismatch between the time at which the LEA is prepared to make such a recommendation and the parents willingness to accept it.

Early Transfer To Adult Provision

Whilst many excluded pupils are within the older age group (post-16 years) there may be reluctance for them to transfer prematurely to adult services. Despite the potential to minimize the disruption related to change, the pupils would experience, none of the interviewees felt that this would be a viable option. Complications arise from the division of services between children and adults. Budgets are held separately and this can present problems even within the same organisation (e.g. Social Services).

Earlier discussion indicated that temporary exclusions could be a catalyst to prompt services to review their arrangements for the child. There was however, resistance to the suggestion that a permanent exclusion might galvanize support in a similar response. Headteachers indicated that such a rationale would be ill conceived, as a permanent exclusion placed the child outside of the system. Moreover exclusion was not perceived as an action that could be viewed as being in the best interest of the child.

CASE SCENARIOS

To illustrate how theses factors can apply, I have provided two case scenarios. These accounts arose from the disclosures of Headteachers during the course of the interviews. However, it needs to be acknowledged that the act of selection may skew the weighting given to some factors. In addition these accounts constitute only the Headteachers version of reality. No attempt has been made to verify what transpired. Some minor modifications have also been made to preserve the anonymity of the people concerned.

Case A.

This boy had a diagnosis of autism and was placed in an SLD school. A related problem was his diet. Parents were alleged to give him whatever he demanded

as a method of coping with the tantrums that could follow if they failed to comply. When he was excluded, at the age of 12 years old, he weighed 21 stone. His size added to the management problems experienced by the school. There had been a catalogue of violent incidents, extending over a number of years. He joined the school from the primary SLD school where there had been several serious incidents:

> "*he'd actually broken a teacher's arm there, and it got to such a state where the teacher's husband would sit at the back of the class to support his wife, because he was frightened of this boy doing something to her again. And the teacher actually retired in the end.*"

On entry to the school, additional staffing was allocated and an experienced assistant was assigned to support him in class. As the situation deteriorated, he attended on a part-time basis (3 hours/day). The critical point arose when he started to refuse the medication prescribed to facilitate his management (Melleril)[25]. At this point he was permanently excluded, his behaviour being perceived to be out of the control of the school, and was causing injury to himself and other pupils. He was described as hitting "*one child so hard that she was propelled across the room*". The Headteacher felt that there was a risk of other pupils being seriously injured if he continued to attend the school.

The school had been working with the clinical psychology team and educational psychologist, to structure their intervention. A psychiatrist was also involved, primarily to support the parents. At one point they attended family counselling but decided not to continue with this service. The social services department was understaffed and consequently there was no on-going involvement, although the duty social worker would respond to emergencies. An outreach

[25] Melleril is the proprietary name for thioridazine, used to tranquilize and treat psychosis. Often used where challenging behaviours are involved (Morton et al, 1992)

support worker was also going into the home, to support the family and allow them to have an occasional break.

Two years after the exclusion he weighed 24 stone. He remains out of school and has been refused a place by twenty other day special schools. The LEA feels that a residential placement would provide the only viable placement and is willing to commit to the necessary funding. However parents have refused to consider such an option, and they have recently taken the case to the SEN tribunal requesting the permanent exclusion be overturned. The possibility of providing home tuition has been explored but the Health & Safety advisor has indicated that providing this within the child's home would present an unacceptable risk.

Case B.

A girl, who was finally excluded in Year 7, had been attending the SLD school from her pre-school years. Behavioural challenges had always been present in some form but the damage she could inflict progressively increased, as a function of her size and strength. Whilst she had previously targeted staff, she was increasingly injuring other children. This provoked concern from parents and staff. There was considerable input from the educational psychologist and other support services. Despite an analysis of her behaviour, the functions and triggers proved difficult to determine. Attacks appeared suddenly, in a spontaneous and apparently unpredictable fashion. Following a period of particularly difficult behaviour, the school served notice that her placement would be terminated at the end of the week. On her last day at school, she hospitalised one of the two assistants, assigned to protect other pupils.

She was out of school for a time (approximately half a term) before being placed in a residential (38 week/year) EBD school. Parents welcomed the residential component, as they had not been managing at home, but the Headteacher raised concern about the appropriateness of the placement. Within

half term she was excluded from this placement, and she spent a further three terms out of school with some support provided via home tuition. She is currently in full-time residential care and attends another day SLD school two mornings per week. The LEA provided an additional temporary classroom and employed a full-time teacher and LSA solely for this one child. Her behaviour continues to be challenging.

11 DISCUSSION

Discussion, of the outcomes of this study, has been organized to address the initial research questions.

1 HOW MANY PUPILS ARE PERMANENTLY EXCLUDED FROM SLD SCHOOLS?

The survey represented a comprehensive review of the permanent exclusions made by SLD schools over the past five years. Moreover the high rate of return and the consistency with which background details match national data (OfSTED, 2000) suggests that these data can reliably be generalized to the national context.

There must always be some concern about the reliability of retrospective studies. Arguments tend to target the selective nature of memory and the possibility of introducing subjective distortion. It also needs to be acknowledged that the ability to recall information deteriorates over time. I would suggest that these arguments are less convincing in this context. Permanent exclusions represent rare and traumatic events, which engender a strong sense of failure in special schools (also Osler et al., 2001). The maximum number of permanent exclusions reported by SLD schools over the past five years was three. Consequently the numbers are small, the action taken requires formal notification (hence explicit criteria are involved), the incidents are significant for those involved and the data collected is relatively factual. These factors support the likelihood of obtaining reliable and valid information.

The survey indicated that the number of permanent exclusions, within this sample, ranged from 12-15 per academic year (mean = 14.2 / year). Calculated as a percentage of the pupil population this would constitute 0.10%. The PANDA data (OfSTED, 2000) quotes the Register of Educational

Establishment as identifying 331 schools as day SLD schools. Proportionally this suggests that within England approximately 23 pupils are excluded from day SLD schools each academic year. The prorated figures between 1994/5-1998/9 ranged from 19-24 pupils.

The main sources of comparison are the recent OfSTED publications (OfSTED, 1999, 2000 & 2001). The OfSTED (1999) exclusion data, based on the DfEE's school census for the academic year 1996-7 report, 0.10% as the exclusion rate. A precise comparison, however, is difficult because of the way the results are reported. Calculations imply that the pupil numbers are in the range 23-25 pupils. My data for 1996-7 identified 14 permanent exclusions within 207 schools. Pro-rating this data to 343 schools suggests 23 exclusions. If one assumes similar pupil numbers for 1997-8, it implies a prevalence of 0.10%. The correspondence between these two data sets supports the argument that the recall of such data is reliable.

OfSTED (2000 & 2001) quote SLD schools as reporting 20 permanent exclusions from 20 schools in the academic year 1997-8 and 20 exclusions from 18 schools in 1998-9. This represented 0.08% & 0.09% of the pupil population. My data for 1997-8 and 1998-9 (207 schools) were 15 exclusions from 15 schools and 0.10% of the population. The prorated figures suggest 24 exclusions from 24 schools, for both years. That the two figures are comparable is reassuring; that they differ at all is of concern.

There is no obvious reason why the OfSTED data should be less reliable than those derived from this survey (or vice versa), both constitute school surveys and are subject to similar types of error. A difficulty in making direct comparisons is that OfSTED combines the exclusion data from day schools, with those having boarding facilities. A question to arise is whether day and boarding schools exclude at different rates. Credible arguments could be advanced both for and against this proposition. One possibility is that schools

that permanently excluded a pupil in 1997-8 may be more highly represented in my sample. Hence any calculations based on proportional increases would be inclined to overestimate the numbers. However it is equally apparent that the official exclusion figures for mainstream schools (DfEE 2000a & 2001) were consistently lower than those obtained by Godfrey and Parsons (1998)[26]. An alternative argument suggested by this anomaly is that schools may be more reticent to report exclusion figures in official returns.

The prevalence of permanent exclusions varied between schools, with the highest excluding schools being some ten times above the average. However, the small size of schools makes percentage differences extremely volatile. Local factors can also skew the proportion of particular groups of pupils, consequently high "exclusion" rates may merely be a function of more challenging pupils being on the school roll.

2 WHAT FACTORS LEAD THE HEADTEACHER OF AN SLD SCHOOL TO DECIDE A CHILD SHOULD NO LONGER CONTINUE TO ATTEND?

Headteachers perceived their schools to offer a flexible and child-centered approach to education. Some returns opposed the concept of exclusion, despite this being against the direction of questioning, although most acknowledged it might be used as a last resort. This basic disposition, makes questions as to "*what prompts schools to contemplate exclusion*" more germane.

MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

There is little doubt that permanent exclusion is viewed as a mechanism for enabling the school to maintain a safe environment. The main anxiety focused on the school's duty of care to pupils. This was frequently expressed as a Health & Safety issue. The interviews indicated that in all the cases in which pupils

[26] See Figure 4.3.

had been permanently excluded the level of violence exhibited had prompted the decision.

> "*the health, safety and well being of all the other members of the school, both staff and pupils is to my mind the most likely reason for an exclusion.*"

The data suggested that SLD schools are willing to tolerate a wide range of behaviour that might constitute a legitimate concern in most other types of school. Typically schools had been managing significant levels of challenging behaviour for some time prior to the exclusion. Concerns had, however, often been brought to a head, following specific incidents which emphasized the level of risk the child presented.

Support for this view was found throughout the survey. Even when the figures are adjusted to accommodate gender differences in the school population, it is clear that males are twice as likely to be excluded. However these figures are not as extreme as those found in mainstream schools (eg DfEE, 1999a) nor were there increased gender effects in the primary phase (Parsons et al., 1995). In fact counter to the mainstream data the proportion of males excluded, increased during the secondary phase. Like the mainstream findings (DfEE, 1999a), however, the proportion of pupils permanently excluded increases with age. The study suggested that younger pupils were deemed easier to manage, physically. Moreover the majority of responses linked exclusion and age via the size and strength of pupils. It was further suggested that this might be more problematic as staff in SLD schools are predominantly female.

> "*Even when behaviour has not deteriorated, the increased size the strength of pupils as they become older increases the problems they present.*"

Male's (1996b) survey of SLD schools also reported that permanent exclusion was in response to violent behaviours, some causing injury to staff. In addition Porter and Lacey (1999) found that 30% of SLD teacher cited the need to protect others as the main consideration when working with challenging behaviour. Neither of these studies however attempted to validate these views with reference to other types of evidence. Whilst it is possible that such reports are biased in order to present the action of schools in a favourable light (McManus, 1987), this is not consistent with the evidence.

The nature and severity of the behavioural challenges was a necessary condition for permanent exclusions. The decisions to exclude however, tended to derive from a combination of factors, including what was viewed to be in the best interests of the child. Attempts to describe factors tends to imply a level of rigidity, in the decision making process, that was not consistent with the evidence. The interviews suggest it is a fluid process which evolves over time. Some factors are more critical in the early stages of decision-making and automatically prompt exclusion if conditions are not met (e.g. staffing). Other pressures emerge as the intervention proceeds. Equally earlier factors may be revisited again with a different emphasis. Many factors constitute basic dilemmas, in which decisions involve advantages and competing costs, this enhances the complexity of the decision-making. For example: How can a school in which the value base is founded on notions of inclusion, contemplate exclusion? How is a belief that the school should be addressing the individual needs of pupils be reconciled with the fact that in responding to one pupil's needs, the progress of others is compromised?

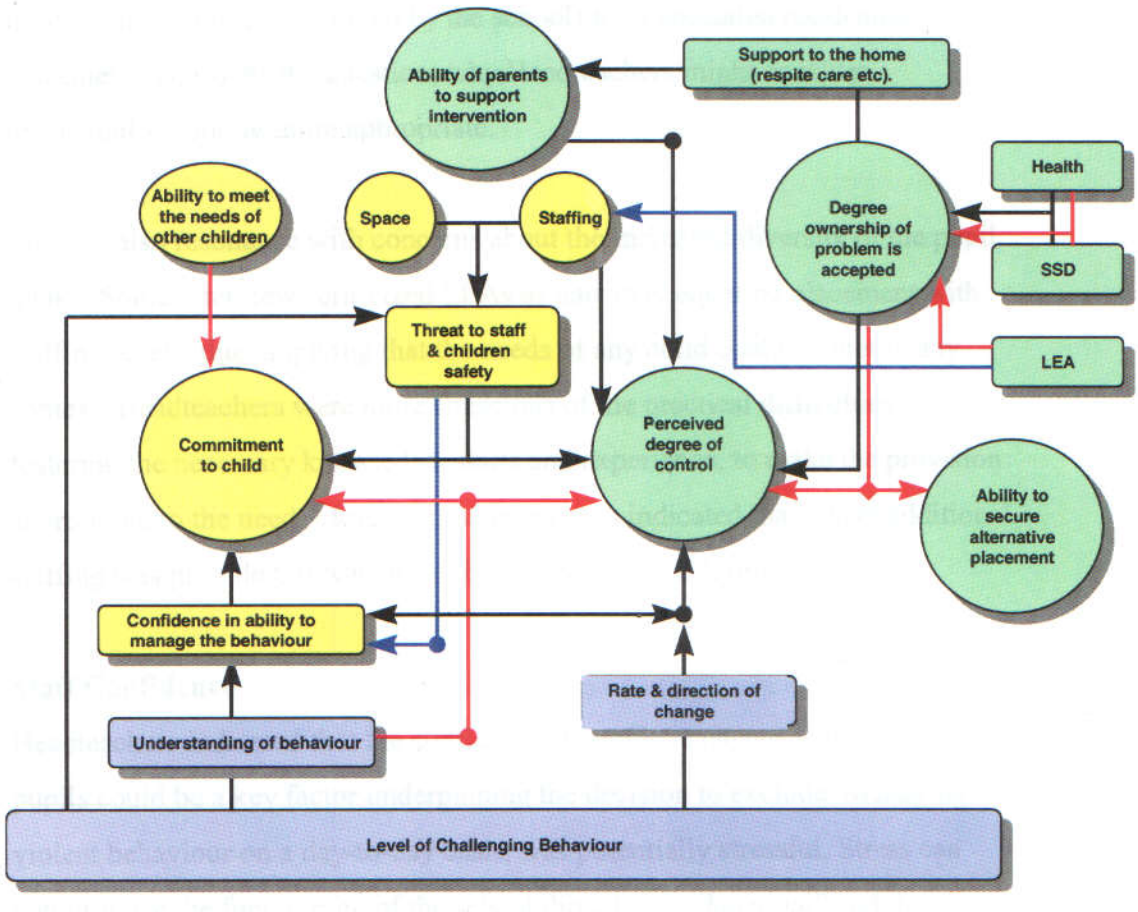
PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Staffing Levels

Headteachers perceive staffing levels to be critical to a schools ability to manage behavioural challenges. Anxiety about funding structures re-occurred throughout the survey and some Headteachers made reference to an erosion in

basic staffing ratios. Prior to exclusion, all of the pupils were receiving at least one-to-one support for much of the day.

Figure 11.1. Cognitive map illustrating the key issues underlying the decision to exclude (based on Miles & Huberman, 1994, 2nd edn).



Note: This cognitive map displays the concepts derived from the analysis of transcripts and relationship between them. The links shown are directional. (Miles & Huberman, 1994 p. 134)

The data however indicated that the relationship between staffing and exclusion is complex. The preoccupation of LEAs to stay within budget may make negotiations over enhancements to staffing harder, but to reach an "en passé" which could only be resolved via exclusion would constitute a major breakdown in communications between the school and LEA. In addition it is likely to be in the ultimate financial interest of the LEA to support the placement.

The interviews indicated that Headteachers had actually experienced little difficulty in securing additional staffing. Whilst such responsiveness could be construed as supportive, it was often viewed more cynically as facilitating containment and as an evasion of the LEAs basic responsibility to meet the needs of the child (as perceived by the school) for a specialist residential placement. This begs the question, why Headteachers might consider a residential schooling more appropriate.

There is also resonance with concerns about the increased diversity of the pupil intake. Some interviews criticized LEAs as narrowly equating placement with staffing levels, thus implying that the needs of any child could be met in any context. Headteachers were more conscious of the practical difficulties of fostering the necessary knowledge, skills and experience, to make the provision appropriate to the need. Moreover the interviews indicated that where additional staffing was provided, it was invariably supplied as LSA time.

Staff Confidence

Headteachers indicated that the confidence of staff to manage challenging pupils could be a key factor underpinning the decision to exclude. Managing violent behaviour on a day-to-day basis, was potentially stressful. Stress can compromise the functioning of the school directly via "*burn-out*" and the inability of staff to continue or indirectly through staff absences. Once confidence is lost the process was viewed as irrevocable, with the school having little option but to move the pupil to another school. Spreading the challenges more equitably amongst staff by rotating staff duties constituted a common responses to this issue.

A number of recent studies have explored the stress perceived by staff working with people having a SLD (Rose, 1995). Whilst most of these relate to work in the adult sector, many factors are equally applicable to school settings. Staff

self-report studies consistently identify that working with people who exhibit challenging behaviours, is a significant source of stress in the work place (Quine and Pahl, 1985; Bromley and Emerson, 1995, Jenkins, Rose and Lovell, 1997). Staff commonly identified feelings of anger, fear and anxiety. Although Murray et al. (1999) failed to find any direct correlation between assaults on staff and sick leave; work with challenging behaviour has been associated with stress, leading to "burnout" (Dyer and Quine, 1998; Mitchell and Hastings, in press). It has also been hypothesized, that in some cases the emotional reactions of staff, have direct implications on how constructively they can support clients. Hastings and Remington (1994a) for instance, have argued that some forms of challenging behaviour may prove so threatening, that staff engage in forms of escape or avoidance behaviour. Consequently their ability to support an intervention may become compromised. This also supports Headteacher concerns that in some situations the dynamics may deteriorate to a point of containment.

Whilst the interviews indicated that Headteacher concerns about stress were motivated by concerns about staff, sensitivities around this issue may become increasingly enhanced by fears of litigation (Lowe, 2001).

Physical Space

The availability of space within the school was deemed a significant factor in being able to respond flexibly to the demands of challenging behaviour. Small classrooms were also perceived to be problematic and limit the number of adults who can be deployed. Some support for this can also be found in Porter and Lacey (1999) who found that a third of teachers cited the need for physical space together with enhanced staffing and smaller class size as key issues in the management of behaviour challenges.

EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Competing Needs Of Other Pupils

Concerns were registered about the impact challenging behaviour has on the schools ability to provide for the needs of other pupils. At some point, attempts to retain pupils in school may compromise the education of other pupils. Headteachers perceived there to be an increased possibility of exclusion in a context where the emphasis is placed on improving standards. There was also anxiety as to whether the school would be judged by OfSTED to have acted prudently in the way they resolved such dilemmas.

The interviews highlighted the extent to which schools had adapted arrangements to meet behavioural challenges. This typically involved placing restrictions on the access other children had to facilities. In addition there were concerns about the effect of the behaviour on the emotional climate in the class. There is some support in the literature for the distorting effect of challenging behaviour on the way staff distribute attention. Hastings and Remington (1994b) found that, in adult SLD settings, a disproportionate amount of staff attention tends to be skewed towards those clients exhibiting challenging behaviour.

Specialist Residential Provision.

In addition Headteachers identified the consideration given to the needs of the child concerned. This related to the schools capacity to provide appropriately for their needs. Many of the comments suggested a dilemma as to whether the current placement might be detrimental to his/her best interests and whether his/her needs could better be met elsewhere. At issue here is whether the school feel they have the necessary skills and experience to meet the pupil's needs. Such issues are likely to be more extreme where there is ambivalence about the pupil's initial placement.

A particular anxiety surrounded practices that might be construed as "*containment*". Some responses also identified confusion about what "EDUCATION" means in respect to behavioural challenges (should the emphasis be placed on the improvement of attainment or the behaviour). Similar issues arise in mainstream schools contexts, and headteachers use exclusion as a means of accessing services, particularly where EBD provision is not available in the LEA (Osler et al., 2001).

The concerns Headteacher's have about the challenging behaviour; can too easily be re-framed as the child's need for more specialist support. Such a response may also be deemed more consistent with child-centred philosophies and reduces the dissonance around issues about inclusion. In a sense the evidence is integral to the problem. Given that a pupil's behaviour is significantly more challenging than the norm, it is axiomatic that their needs differ from those generally provided for within the school. Furthermore, that the challenges have failed to be resolved by the intervention, provides prima facia evidence that the problem is beyond the capacity of the school to resolve. Other beliefs will determine the relative weighting given to such evidence. Perceptions must equally be affected by beliefs about what the alternative placement can provide. This is likely to be shaped by previous experiences both of alternative provision and the effectiveness of local services.

The majority of responses identified the need for consistency, between home and school, in the intervention approach adopted. Some parents were viewed as undermining attempts of the school to resolve the behavioural challenges. This is equally recognized in other sectors of education:

> "*... not all parents will be able or prepared to cooperate in this process*" (DfE, 1994c paragraph 29).

Whilst it was acknowledged that the management approach in the home might be compromised by the stress of living with the child (Lyon, 1991), Headteachers envisaged little chance of reducing the behavioural challenges, without a change in the status quo. The level of support provided to parents was consequently perceived to relate to the success of the intervention. This, however, lies outside of the direct control of the school. The survey indicated that respite care for these children is not readily available across the country. Moreover although some areas had specialist provision for children with challenging behaviour, there were reservations about the ability of most respite units to support children exhibiting behavioral challenges. Children with more extreme behavioural challenges tended to be excluded. Residential schooling offered the potential to provide a consistency of approach (a "*24hr curriculum*").

> "*Some of the problems we have encountered with pupils with challenging behaviour have been caused by parents inability or unwillingness to provide a consistent and structured approach. Despite frequent attempts to help parents, schools have largely been ineffectual in resolving difficult cases and residential provision has to remain an option*".

Residential schools were perceived to have superior staffing levels, more experience in managing such difficulties and a better understanding of behaviour modification techniques. There were also allusions to the provision of a therapeutic regime, an aspect that was not always compatible with the academic focus expected of day SLD schools.

Pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour tend to attract support from a range of services. Whilst this can be advantageous it was generally felt to be poorly coordinated. A residential school is consequently attractive in having the potential to provide a coordinated response from a single point of delivery.

Whether any of these assumptions are valid is a separate issue and some Headteachers remained skeptical. Views expressed in the interviews suggested that residential schools might offer little more than a respite from pupils whose needs were difficult to accommodate. Local arrangements highlight the difficulties of working collaboratively together, whereas the notion of the consistency possible within a residential school remains safely hypothetical.

Even if it is conceded that the consistency argument is legitimate it is difficult to maintain that this is purely an educational need. It overlaps with issues that are the responsibility of other local authority services. Equally the work of other departments are regulated by different legislation, and there are separate lines of financial accountability and competing priorities on how resources should be spent. Hence the potential for inter-departmental tensions is enhanced. The survey showed that the majority of LEAs have no local residential schools for children with challenging behaviour. Hence, in most cases, it would require placement in the independent sector and would probably require the child to be placed away from home.

3 WHY IS A PERMANENT EXCLUSION USED, AS OPPOSED TO OTHER OPTIONS OPEN TO THE SCHOOL?

Interviewees were conscious of policy trends and felt under increased pressure not to permanently exclude. Ultimately however it was not an action that was ever entered into lightly. Whilst temporary exclusion might prompt a review of support arrangements, permanent exclusions were not intended to serve the best interest of the child. Where a pupil presented an unacceptable level of risk to the safety of staff or pupils and all avenues for resolving the difficulties had been explored, there is an impetus to seek an alternative placement. A change of placement would normally be mediated via the formal assessment procedure.

Permanent exclusion consequently represents a breakdown in these arrangements.

Several issues were apparent:

A permanent exclusion might be prompted by a significant and rapid increase in the level of challenge being exhibited. Support systems were not considered flexible enough to respond to such changes. Even where agreement existed to make an alternative placement, the difficulties could overtake the paperwork. A shortage in the availability of independent residential school placements was also perceived to be a complicating factor. Permanent exclusion provided an instant method of terminating the pressure placed upon the school. The issue of schools managing a deteriorating situation and the formal assessment being overtaken by exclusion is also reflected in the mainstream sector (Hayden et al., 1996).

In some cases, the delay in moving the pupil was felt to be exacerbated by the LEA vacillating over the need for such a placement. Residential placements tend to be an expensive, long-term commitment. The LEA has a responsibility to ensure that the placement is justified and that cheaper, alternative options would not be viable. The interviewees suggested that proposals made by LEA officers were often perceived as inadequate and inappropriate. Moreover the sense of urgency experienced by direct care staff was often not reflected at an administrative level. Decisions were consequently delayed beyond the point at which the existing placement was viable.

It was felt that budgetary considerations had hardened attitudes against the use of independent residential schools. Unless the LEA were unable to meet the educational needs locally, there would be an expectation that any residential placement would be jointly funded (between Education, Social Services & Health).

> "*where the authority has been digging its toes in very hard about out of county placements (is) purely on the ..the issue (of) what is a social need and what is an educational one which is a huge issue in this authority.*"

Even where the need for a residential placement was not in dispute the ensuing tensions between departments, relating to funding, could delay the process of placement. The reality was felt to be more complex in that the failure to reach agreement about what response would be appropriate often marked the start of interdepartmental negotiations. The way in which responsibilities for services to children are divided between local authority agencies was perceived to be an underlying difficulty. Moreover the survey indicated that few local authorities (24%) had a policy on such placements and the vast majority of Headteachers (74%) judged there to be poor collaboration between departments over the joint funding of residential placements.

Despite the Children Act 1989 (DoH, 1989) and subsequent circulars (DfE & DoH, 1994f), research indicates that inter-agency collaboration continues to present significant difficulties (Audit Commission, 1994; Mental Health Foundation, 1997; Porter and Lacey, 1999). Dyson et al. (1998) suggested that this lack of co-operation leads to a fragmented response, the underlying difficulties being grounded in the different statutory base of each agency, the lack of a common language to describe a target populations and differences in their basic value base.

Support for the validity of these Headteacher perspectives can be found in a complimentary study by Abbott et al. (2000). This explored the views, about residential special school placements, of education and social service officers in twenty-one local authorities. They found significant discrepancies in both the likelihood that a child would be placed in a residential school and whether such

placements were likely to be joint funded. Joint funding, between education and social services, has become more common in recent years. Historically, education departments had been disposed to take full responsibility for funding placements. Asking Health to contribute is even more recent and not well spread. The move to joint fund placements appears to be prompted by the cost of residential placements (Dyson et al., 1998) and messages from central government encouraging the development of inter-agency decision-making.

Abbott et al. (2000) argue that joint funding is influenced by the LEAs views about the role and function of residential school placements. These can be summarised in the following way and are consistent with the views of Headteachers:

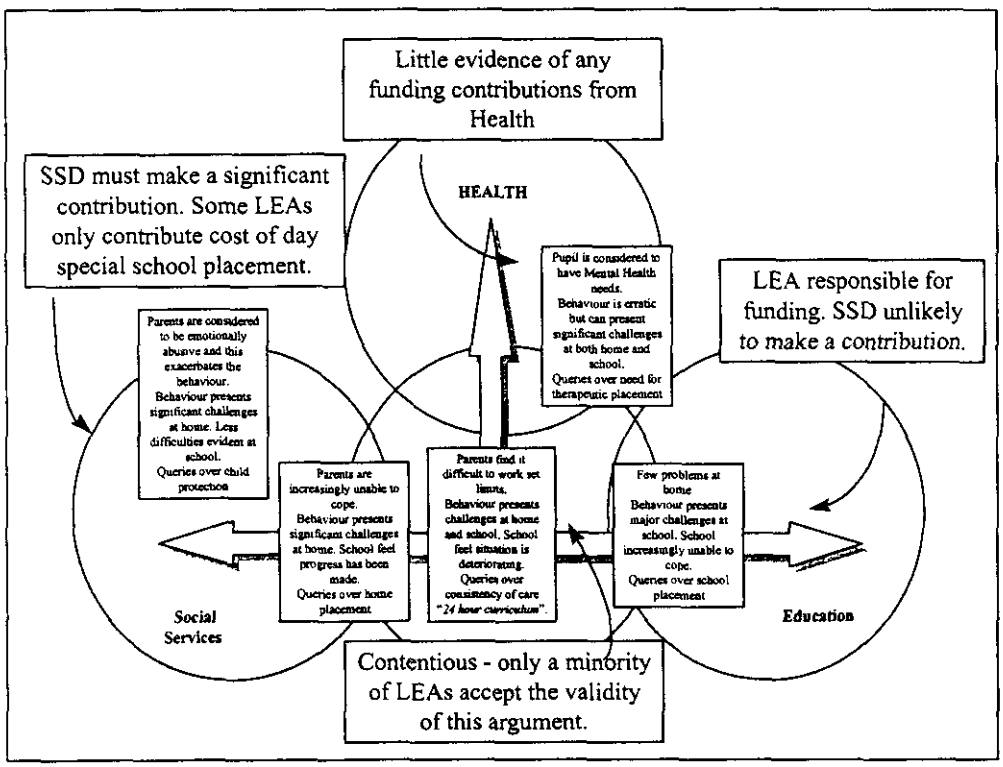
1. Some LEAs accepted that there could be educational grounds for a placement (i.e. where his/her educational needs could not be met locally). Under these circumstances the LEA were unlikely to ask social services to make a contribution. Moreover some social services departments would resist making a contribution if they could meet child and family needs locally. Where schools claimed they could not cope with a child it was inclined to prompt LEAs to accept financial responsibility.
2. Some LEAs argued that they could meet all educational needs in day placements. Where school claimed they could not cope, they were inclined to allocate support to enable the placement to be maintained. Consequently a residential placement was in response to '*social needs*' (home-based difficulties). This proved the most common rationale and the social services department would be expected to make a contribution. Furthermore some LEAs took the view that they would only contribute the cost of the day school placement. LEAs also expressed frustration at social services failure to provide support to families until a crisis had been reached.

Schools were then often "*at the end of their tether*" and inclined to put pressure on the LEA to fund a residential placements.

3. A third issue which Headteachers define as '*residency*'. This relates to the belief that the residential component was of direct educational benefit. This tended to be described as the need for a '*24 hour curriculum*'. This argument was found to be contentious with only a minority of LEAs accepting its validity.

This study is of interest as it suggests that exclusion might be more common where there was a conflict between the views of Headteachers and the LEA over these issues

Figure 11.2: Diagram showing the relationship between the views of local authority officers on funding residential school placements and Headteacher views on possible reasons for such a placement.



Note: Based on Figure 10.1

Abbott et al. (2000) also indicate that some officers admitted shortcomings in their joint placement panels. Each department trying to resist further demands on over-stretched budgets, often dominated the process. Lyon (1991) attests to the lack of a corporate approach to such issues and the frustration that can arise from bureaucratic obstacles which may actually lead to more expensive outcomes:

> "*No one seemed to take the lead in pointing out that it was the same pot of gold from which resources were drawn*" (Lyon, 1991. p.10)

Where responsibility is unclear or "*cost shunting*" (Parsons et al., 1994b) between local authority departments lead to a deadlock in negotiations, identified needs can remain unmet. A permanent exclusion provides one of the few methods by which a school can break such an em passé.

Where it is accepted that a school is unable to meet the child's needs and there is no other viable local placement, a residential school placement may present the only solution. A difficulty encountered by many of the Headteachers interviewed however lay in parental opposition to such a recommendation. This presents a deadlock in negotiations. In the face of increasing behavioural challenges the school may feel that there is no alternative to a permanent exclusion.

4 ARE CHANGES IN EDUCATION POLICY AFFECTING EXCLUSION PATTERNS?

There are a number of embedded issues in the question. The first is whether there are trends in the data, which warrant consideration. The second is whether any patterns of this type can be associated with changes in education policy.

A number of studies have suggested that the number of exclusions in special schools have been increasing (Parsons et al., 1995; Godfrey and Parsons, 1998; DfEE, 1998a). This study, however, failed to support this in respect to non-residential maintained SLD schools. The data indicate that the number of permanent exclusions have been fairly constant over the past five years. An implication therefore is that any increase in special school exclusions must relate to increases in other sectors. Moreover, whilst Male's (1996b) survey reported Headteachers as perceiving the number of exclusions to be to be increasing, this was not replicated in this study. Of the Headteachers surveyed only a minority (22%, n=226) perceived there to be an increase in exclusion. However evidence of an increasing trend towards the notion of "*exclusion*" might still be concluded if:

- the total pupil population in SLD schools has decreased (i.e. the percentage of exclusions has increased).
- there have been qualitative changes in the pupil population (i.e. a less challenging population would signify a decrease in tolerance).
- alternative options are being used to remove pupils exhibiting behavioural challenges.

Statistical reports (e.g. DfEE, 1998b) indicate that the number of special school pupils have decreased over the past five-year period (1994/5-1998/9). However there is little to show how this trend applies to SLD special schools. The move to develop complex learning difficulty schools also makes the information from other sources difficult to interpret. Having note the lack of supportive data, there is equally little to support the hypothesis that the number of pupils attending SLD schools has declined significantly enough to influence the data in this way. Male's (1996b) survey of 75 SLD found that almost a third of schools reported that their pupil roll was stable, whilst just over a half (56%) reported an increase. The recent PANDA data (OfSTED, 1999, 2000 & 2001) also

suggests that the number of permanent exclusions from SLD schools has been fairly consistent as a percentage of the pupil population.[27]

Whether the population has become less challenging is difficult to answer in any absolute sense. Contrary to the proposition, this survey indicated that the majority of Headteachers (54%) felt that there had been an increase in the number of pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour over this period. This was commonly associated with a perceived increase in the number of pupils having an ASD and an increasing diversity in the types of need being accommodated in SLD schools. Furthermore the interviews indicated that this had prompted some schools to identify behaviour management as a priority training need. This perception of an increase in challenging behaviour is also supported in Male (1996b). She reports that 60% of SLD Headteachers considered that challenging behaviour had increased in recent years. However whilst Male (1996b) supports the reliability of these findings the study does not enhance the validity, as it essentially posed the same question, to the same population. Whilst the subjective nature of such responses raises concerns about the validity of the assertion, the survey provided no evidence of a decline. Equally there is no obvious reason why a decline in the level of challenging behaviour might have occurred. In fact Qureshi and Alborz (1992) predicted that the numbers of SLD pupils exhibiting behavioural challenges is likely to increase.

Exclusions represent only one disposal option (Booth, 1996). Consequently we need to consider the trend in relation to the use of other options. As a Statement should protect the educational needs of pupils attending SLD schools, the main alternative is via transfer to an alternative school.

Similar cautions to those cited in respect to the exclusion data need to be born in mind. The problem associated with accurate recall is a concern, and less convincingly accounted for in this respect. Whereas an exclusion represented a

[27] 0.1% in 1996/7; 0.08% in 1997/8 and 0.09% in 1998/9.

breakdown in the placement, transfer to an alternative school is unlikely to be perceived as such a traumatic event, and consequently may be less accurately recalled (Kleinsmith and Kaplan discussed in Baddeley, 1976 pp.46-49). Transfer is also more common. The maximum number reported by any school over the past five years being six (twice the number of reported exclusions). Whilst the numbers remain small the criteria is less clear. It hinges on judgements about the degree of challenge presented and the relationship between this and the transfer. The decision to request a transfer can come from a variety of sources and for different reasons. Some of these factors may also be inter-linked with the behavioural challenges being presented (e.g. a deterioration in the home situation). Consequently there is more subjectivity in interpreting these facts.

The survey indicated that the total number of pupils to transfer to other forms of provision on grounds of their behaviour over the past five years, ranged from 25-69 per academic year. Whilst the precise figures may be disputed, the increase in numbers is difficult to ignore. The figures for the academic year 1994/5 were nearly doubled by 1997/8 and continued to rise. Consequently one is forced to the conclusion that there is evidence of an increase in the use of alternative placements over this time period. What is in doubt is what exactly the concept of alternative placement means. A trend of this sort had not been anticipated and clarification was consequently not sought in the questionnaire. For some children it would equate to a placement in an independent residential school. However the interviews also indicated that some children are transferring to alternative day SLD schools. It is consequently safest to conclude that there is an increase in "*turmoil*" within the system.

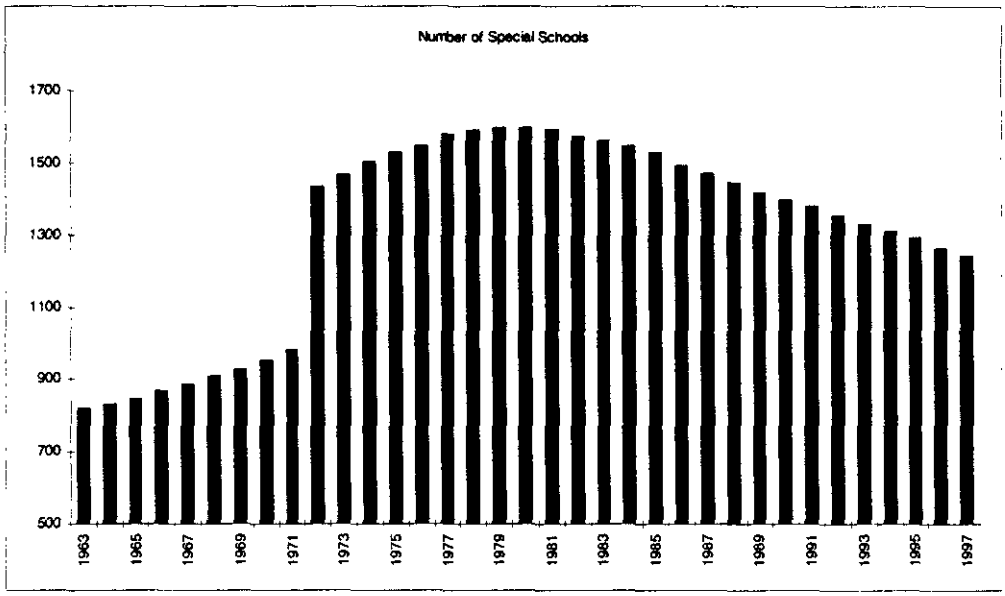
The second issue is whether this increased "*turmoil*" can be associated with changes in educational policy.

Increasing diversity.

Approximately half of the responses perceived there to have been an increase in the number of pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour. Of those offering an explanation the majority associated this with a shift in the type of need for which SLD schools were being asked to cater. In particular the pupil population was felt to have become increasingly diverse. This raises the possibility that such placements may make the management of those presenting behavioural challenges more difficult to accommodate.

More able pupils were felt to be placed in mainstream or in MLD special schools (to meet a similar decline in numbers). Headteachers also perceived an increase in the number of pupils with more profound learning disabilities. These trends have also been identified elsewhere. In a survey of placement trends in England and Wales, Cuckle (1997) found that, although there was local variation, there was an increase in the proportion of children with Down's syndrome placed in mainstream schools between 1983 & 1996. This increase was most dramatic between 1983-88, presumably in response to the 1981 Education Act (DES, 1981). Moreover there is evidence to suggest that the placement of these pupils in MLD schools has been maintained. The Audit Commission / HMI report (1992) also supports the notion that the needs of a greater proportion of pupils with SENs are being met within mainstream schools.

Figure 11.3. Graph of the total number of special schools in England 1963-1997 (DfEE 1998b p.15)



In addition the total number of special schools in England has changed. The DfEE (1998b) data indicates a gradual increase in the number of special school between 1963 and 1972. The discontinuity in 1972 relates to responsibility for SLD pupils transferring from Health to LEAs on 1st April 1971[28] and the change of status from junior training centres to special schools.

The number of maintained and non-maintained special schools in England peaked in 1979 at 1,599. From this point there has been a steady decline in numbers. In 1997 there were only 1,239 - a reduction of 360 schools.

During the same period the number of full-time pupils attending these schools also dropped from 130,871 to 95,195 (DfEE, 1998b) - a decline of 35,676 pupils. However the reduction in schools is not solely explainable in these terms. There is also evidence of a genuine decline in the percentage of pupils attending special schools. In 1979 the special school numbers represented 0.016% of the total pupil population but in 1997 they represented only 0.013%.

[28] As a result of the Education (Handicapped Children) Act 1970.

Increase in the number of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have also been cited. Chamberlain (1991) reported the perinatal mortality rate had fallen between 1930 and 1980 from 60-10/1000. The implication of staffing in SLD schools was the focus of a government circular (DfE/DoH, 1994c).

Headteachers also perceived there to have been an increase in pupils from MLD and EBD schools with more complex needs. In the interviews, MLD pupils with language difficulties or an ASD were cited as examples of this group. In some case it was a function of the reduction in special school provision or a growing reluctance by LEAs to use specialist facilities such as hospital and residential schools. The most striking feature of responses was the consistency with which reference was made to a perceived increase in the number of pupils having an ASD. Such an explanation was cited in approximately 62% of explanations and was reiterated throughout the survey.

These comments were not merely passing references to changing SLD demographics but were specifically linked to increasing difficulties in meeting the needs of pupils exhibiting behavioural challenges, within a setting catering for pupil whose needs ranged from PMLD to MLD. The juxtaposition of challenging pupils, with those having PMLD also created tensions. Although the strength of the relationships was extremely weak, the statistical analysis found an associated exclusion and the recent inclusion of PMLD pupils. The interviews suggested concern was often as much about the compatibility of need, as the issue of protection.

Whilst the notion that pupil populations are becoming more complex and consequently more difficult to manage is plausible, the connection with exclusion is not established. The percentage of the pupil population attending special schools[29] ranged from 0.2% to 2.3% (DfEE, 2000b). If this argument is

[29] In the LEAs associated with returned questionnaires.

valid one might expect that SLD schools in LEAs with the lower percentage of special school placements to have a more condensed population and hence exclude more pupils. However no such relationship was found[30], although it is possible that these percentages do not accurately reflect what is really happening. It is likely to hinge on the way in which LEAs designate special school provision.

The need for more specialist training and appropriate learning environments was associated with the increase in ASD pupils. Concerns about the ability to provide for MLD/EBD pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour also related to differences in the type of intervention they were felt to require. This gulf between Headteacher perceptions of the child's needs and what the school was designed to provide, is an important factor in considering whether a pupil's needs might best be catered for elsewhere. Unless the needs of such pupil's have been properly accommodated they remain at risk of having their placement terminated. It is interesting to speculate on the role of labeling, in fostering this sense of alienation from the needs of specific groups.

In a study of stress experienced by teachers working with SEN pupils, Male and May (1997) found that SLD teachers ranked workload as the main contributory factor, with challenging behaviour coming second. They also advanced the hypothesis that working with a heterogeneous range of pupils may further erode self-efficacy:

> "*...it may be that the challenge of meeting this diverse range of needs impinges upon special school teachers' sense of self-efficacy, competence and achievement*". Male and May (1997 p. 139).

[30] An independent T-test exploring the relationship between exclusion (whether or not schools had excluded a pupil during the past five years) and the percentage of the pupil population attending special schools in that LEA, identified no significant relationship between the data sets. A similar finding was evident when looking at transfer to alternative provision.

If this hypothesis is found to be valid it would suggest a mechanism by which concerns about the heterogeneity of the population (also found in Male, 1996b), staff stress and the ability of staff to respond to behavioural challenges might be linked.

Staff Skills

Whilst staffing levels presented a legitimate concern, this study suggests that this was seldom the cause of breakdown. However, the interviews indicated that additional staffing tended to be in the form of LSA time. Headteachers were concerned that whilst manpower may be an issue, the knowledge, skills and experience of staff was equally relevant. Despite the excellent qualities of many assistants they inevitably have the least training. It was also suggested that the enhanced volume of staff generated by such practices might make it more difficult to maintain a cohesive approach to behaviour management.

This tendency to allocate additional LSA time to support children with challenging behaviours is also cited in Male (1996b). Her analysis of the staffing trends in SLD schools also raised concerns that warrant further attention. There has been some improvement in the teacher:pupil ratios over the past 10 years but this has been outstripped by a significant increase in the LSA:pupil ratio. OfSTED (2000) report the mean size of an SLD school to be 69 pupils. Modeling these ratios on this figure suggests there were approximately nine teachers & seven LSAs in the average SLD school in the early 1980s, ten teachers & six LSAs in 1990 but eleven teachers & seventeen assistants by the end of the 1990's.

Male (1996b) also indicated that a number of schools reported having replaced nursery nurses with unqualified LSAs. These trends appear to be motivated by a wish to increase staffing levels and reduce costs. The dramatic increase in LSAs, in all aspects of education, prompted the DfEE to sponsor research into

the effective management and training of LSAs (Farrell et al., 1999). This report identified the lack of a recognized and accredited training programme for LSAs, as well as the need to formalize employment practices and establish a proper career structure.

Figure 11.4. Table documenting the changes in staffing ratios in SLD schools.

	Preddy & Mittler (1981)	Evans & Ware (1987)	Male (1996b)	Julian & Ware (1998)	OfSTED (2000)	Current study (2000)
Teacher: pupil	1:7.6	1:6.9	1:7	1:6.9	1:6.3	1:6.29
Assistant :pupil	1:9.6	1:10.8	1:5		1:4.0*	1:4.1

* A direct comparison with the OfSTED report is difficult as they quote assistant data in hours/pupil/week. This figure is calculated on the assumption that a standard week is equivalent to 30 hours.

Developing this argument further, Male (1996b) draws attention to Mittler's (1993) concern about the decline in specialist SLD teacher training courses in the UK (also Porter, 1996). The implication is that the majority of teachers currently appointed to SLD schools are likely to have had no specialist training. Miller and Garner (1996) report that in 1995 approximately 50% of teachers in SLD schools were without any form of additional training or qualifications. If one accepts the suggestion that the needs of the school population has become increasingly complex, these findings imply that schools are attempting to respond to this need by increasing the number of less qualified staff.

Supporting PMLD Pupils

Most of the SLD schools in the survey catered for a range of learning difficulty, with approximately 30% of the pupil population being described as PMLD. In the past the majority of PMLD pupils were educated in segregated classes but over the past 10 years, the trend has been to integrate them more fully within the school (Male, 1996b). Approximately 70% of the schools in the survey reported

that they were currently organized in this way. Given Headteacher concerns about Health & Safety issues, one hypothesis is that management of challenging behaviour has been made more difficult by the normalization of arrangements for PMLD pupils. Russell (1997a) draws attention to the inherent incompatibility of mixing PMLD children with children exhibiting challenging behaviour.

There was little overt support for this in the survey. Statements to this effect were given relatively low ratings as factors linked to exclusion and these sentiments were also poorly represented in the open-ended responses. However most of the variables that reach statistical significance have a PMLD component, although the strength of the associations are weak. The Headteachers interviewed had all moved to integrate PMLD pupils within the main body of the school. They acknowledged that these developments complicate the management of challenging behaviour but none perceived this to be a significant problem. They indicated that they would deploy additional staff or restructure arrangements in order to meet the competing needs of pupils.

Management Of Challenging Behaviour

The survey indicated that the majority of SLD schools (87%) are currently attempting to provide support for pupils presenting challenging behaviors in normal classroom settings, rather than segregated classes (also Male, 1996b). Given the concerns about maintaining a safe environment, these arrangements would seem to increase the vulnerability of other pupils. Despite this hypothesis, however, there was no significant correlation between such arrangements and exclusion.

The interviews suggested segregated classes were considered outmoded and Headteachers would prefer to keep challenging pupils with their peer group. The primary concern about segregated classes was that they had the potential to

be degrading both for pupils and the staff concerned. Placing pupils with challenging behaviours together was not felt to be an appropriate way of fostering more appropriate behaviour patterns. It increased the exposure of pupils to inappropriate role models and could create tensions that were likely to exacerbate the probability of outbursts. Segregated arrangements were also felt to be onerous for the staff concerned. As well as the emotional stress of working in a violent environment, other staff were more likely to attribute blame for outbursts on the members of staff concerned. Integrated arrangements had the potential of ensuring the behaviour remained a shared responsibility. Staff working directly with the child could be rotated, thus providing a degree of respite.

There would appear to be some evidence supporting many of these views. In looking at the management of challenging behaviour within SLD schools, Porter and Lacey (1999) found a significant correlation between staff dissatisfaction and the use of segregated arrangements. This is also reflected in studies within the Health Services (Jenkins, Rose and Lovell 1997) where working in segregated settings was associated with greater stress, lower morale and lower job satisfaction.

National Curriculum

There have been concerns, in other sectors of education, about the conflicting needs of children with behavioural difficulties and the demands of the National Curriculum (Bate and Moss, 1997). However there was little support for this from SLD Headteachers. Despite the potential for such factors to distort practice it was ranked as the least significant item. Moreover this issue did not arise spontaneously in any of the open-ended sections and the Headteachers interviewed felt there was sufficient flexibility in interpreting statutory requirements for this not to be a significant issue. Again this finding is supported by Porter and Lacey (1999).

Residential Provision.

Caring for a child with challenging behaviour has a profound impact upon the day-to-day lives of their families. Abbott et al. (2000) noted that whilst a number of social services departments could provide support to families within the context of their own homes, what parents wanted was respite outside the home. Similarly Lyon (1991) notes the intolerable strain such children could place on the marital relationship and that residential care may provide the only solution:

> "*An immediate tangible improvement in all areas of family life was noted when a child was placed in residential care, and the family relieved of the day-to-day 24 hour responsibility for the child.*"
>
> (Lyon, 1991, p. 3)

Where respite care outside of the family is not available locally, the pressure for residential education may increase. Ultimately if the situation at home collapsed a residential placement may present the only option in meeting the care needs of the child.

Many parents find foster placements unacceptable as it serves to reinforce a sense of failure. Indeed the breakdown may not relate to a lack of commitment to, or affection for, the child. Akin to the issues in school, residential care was perceived as spreading the care load currently falling solely on parents. Russell (1997a), in reporting the outcomes of the Mental Health Committee of Enquiry, documents messages from families who felt isolated and exhausted, and often saw residential provision as the only solution. Despite this need 77% of Headteachers indicated that there were no such provisions available locally, either in the form of a residential home or school. Consequently such needs again increase the demands for independent residential schooling.

Comments in both the survey and interviews recognized that issues relating to behaviour are difficult to compartmentalize. Equally the services provided by different agencies (or lack of them) impact on each other; often shunting issues between them, rather than providing a solution for families and children. One hypothesis for the increase in alternative placements therefore, is that it may represent an increased demand on residential care. Consequently social service policy and provision may be an essential feature of this process.

> "*the incremental rise in the number of pupils moving to alternative provision may not necessarily be linked in anyway to changes within education policy, but either to changes in policy in other local authority services, or an increase in the demand for families to have children exhibiting challenging behaviours ..... accommodated residentially.*"

Far from endorsing the removal of more difficult pupils in this way, approximately a third of responses were highly critical of the lack of residential facilities. The development of a local residential unit, from which the pupil could continue to attend the local school, was a common suggestion. Many Headteachers however cast doubt on whether this was ever likely to be realized. Enhancing local infrastructure is more difficult, than arguing that the response was demanded by SEN legislation. Local resources were also susceptible to financial restraints. Contrary to logic, the principle of "*keeping children with their parents*" was also cited as a reason for the lack of policy development in this area. The local authorities concerned had accepted the desirability of maintaining children locally without establishing the necessary infrastructure to enable this to happen.

12 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, this study suggests that each year there are approximately 25 permanent exclusions from SLD schools in England. This represents approximately 0.10% of the pupil population in these schools. The analysis of Headteachers views identified three main factors relating to exclusion:

- the need to protect staff and other pupils from physical harm.
- the need to break deadlocks in order to resolve the difficulties being experienced.
- concerns about the confidence of staff in responding to the challenges presented.

The need to protect staff and other pupils is a central consideration in supporting pupils who present behavioural challenges. It consequently represents a necessary but not sufficient criterion, underpinning the decision to permanently exclude a pupil. In all the cases examined, pupils had exhibited violent behaviours, typically over an extended period of time. At times these behaviours presented a risk to other pupils and frequently incurred injury to staff. Headteachers suggested that a point might be reached where these safety concerns take precedence over all other considerations. The status quo then becomes unacceptable and if these concerns cannot be resolved, an exclusion may present the only option open to the school.

The allocation of staff presents the main method Headteachers use to reduce the risk of injury. Staffing levels are consequently a key consideration. However, Headteachers suggested that this rarely presented an obstacle, as LEAs were inclined to provide support under such extreme conditions. What could prove problematic is a rapid or significant increase in the level of challenge being

presented. This tends to overwhelm the ability to respond and brings the crises to a head. Whilst staff numbers are important, the confidence of staff is more critical. Once this is lost the problem became acute and there is often little option but to remove the pupil from the school. In addition, Headteachers identified the importance of having the physical space within which to manage the behaviour.

The decision to exclude also appears linked to perceptions about whether the school can provide the conditions necessary to bring about an improvement in the pupil's behaviour. Judgements about whether the placement might be detrimental to the pupil's best interests and whether his/her needs could better be met elsewhere are involved.

Consideration is also given to the degree to which consistency in approach can be achieved between those working with the child. The most important aspect is the consistency achieved between home and school. In some cases the actions of parents were judged to undermine the school's ability to successfully intervene. Some parents are perceived to have become so "worn-down" by behavioural challenges that they become focused on little more than the family's "survival". This highlights the role of inter-departmental cooperation in facilitating the intervention. Whilst most pupils who exhibited challenging behaviour attracted support from a variety of services, this is perceived to be poorly coordinated. In addition the majority of Headteachers are critical of the level of respite care available to families. Children exhibiting more extreme levels of challenging behaviour, are also reported as being excluded from respite provision because of their behaviour. Thus the onus is placed back on parents. Where pupils are judged to require residential care this is rarely available locally.

Balanced against this are the implication for the school, of continuing to support the pupil. Of particular concern is the impact on the school's ability to provide

for the educational needs of other pupils. Consistently responses made reference to concerns about the increasing diversity of need expected to be met within the context of an SLD school. The juxtaposition of challenging pupils with those having PMLD creates particular tensions. Although the statistical relationships were weak, the variables that reached significance linked exclusion with a PMLD component. The relationship between the percentage of PMLD pupils on roll, and those schools who had excluded a pupil over the past five years, perhaps offered tentative support to the hypothesis that protecting such vulnerable pupils within a challenging environment can be difficult.

Whilst these factors might cause Headteachers to query the appropriateness of the pupils' placement this would normally be mediated through the formal assessment procedure. A permanent exclusion might still occur, however, where concerns about the risk to staff or pupils continue and events overtake the paperwork. In some cases the sense of urgency experienced by school staff was not perceived to be reflected at an administrative level, although it was acknowledged that the lack of residential placements might equally present difficulties. Headteachers felt that delays could also occur where the LEA was ambivalent about the need for the placement and were exploring other options. This was felt to reflect budgetary constraints and a hardening of attitudes against use of residential school placements. Alternatively there was wide spread experience of difficulties over the joint funding of placements. Thus a bureaucratic deadlock could occur in the face of obvious need. A further problem was where there were no viable local option but parents remained opposed to their child transferring to a residential school. Ultimately exclusion terminates the pressure on schools and may generate a shift in the status quo.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It would be wrong to dismiss this study, on the grounds that it relates to an insignificant number of pupils. These pupils represent the tip of an iceberg. They are the extreme cases in which behaviour has conspired with other factors

to cause support structures to breakdown. Many of the factors underpinning such exclusions will have relevance to the larger group of pupils exhibiting behavioural challenges within the context of SLD schools.

Headteachers perceived there to have been a shift in the types of pupils LEA's were placing in SLD schools. Hence there is an increasing gulf between the needs of pupil's and that which the school had originally been conceived to meet. An embedded issue is that this process had evolved in a "*piece meal*" fashion, without a clear vision of the role the schools are intended to fill. Consequently there is inadequate consideration of the resources, staffing structures and training requirements that are required. A particular issue is the compatibility of some groups of children with very different needs. Attention needs to be given to achieving a better balance of pupils within schools. This would require LEAs to undertake a strategic review of their provision.

The response to pupils exhibiting behavioural challenges is often perceived to be reactive and superficial: "*sticking plasters over something that needs a more radical solution.*" The sticking plaster is typically in the form of additional LSA time. In some cases Headteachers perceived the need for a more fundamental review of staffing or modification to the fabric of the school.

Clarity in the role envisaged for SLD schools, would help resolve some of the dilemmas relating to the competing needs of other pupils, and whether the school has acted prudently in resolving them. By default such clarity would also help define the level of need schools are expected to meet. Currently schools are required to make the case for an alternative placement, rather than being able to refer to agreed guidelines. Despite the integrity of policies designed to maintain children with their families, some pupils will require a residential placement. Being clear about what needs can be provided for within local provision, and what aspects will need to be met elsewhere, must be an important aspect of SEN policy. This reiterates points in the Mental Health Foundation (1997)

report which emphasized that a residential placement may present a positive option for some children and identified a lack of criteria for such placements.

Managing a deteriorating situation requires an innovative and flexible response if exclusion is to be avoided. The onus for such management is typically left with the Headteacher, although the implementation of plans may require the agreement of or funding by, the LEA or other services. As indicated in many parts of this study, maintaining staff confidence under such conditions is one of the one most critical aspects. Providing intensive input from support services at strategic times may be an important form of support. Currently however, support services were viewed as over-stretched and too inflexible in the way in which they are organized.

The needs of children presenting challenging behaviour and their families are typically the overlapping responsibility of a variety of local authority services. Lyon (1991) quotes one foster mother as having over twenty-one people from different agencies involved with a child in her care. Rather than enhancing the quality of support, the involvement of agencies is felt to increase the difficulty of establishing a coherent strategy. Similarly, at an organizational level, the actions of one service to reduce costs often has human and financial repercussions for other services. In only a quarter of responses was the level of collaboration between agencies judged to be good.

The level of support provided to families was also inadequate. In only a quarter of response did Headteachers judge the level of respite care provided to these families, to be well addressed. Where the level of challenge was more extreme, children were often excluded from respite services. Thus the family could be deemed to be providing respite for the local authority services designed to support them. The ability of parents to work constructively with the school, on the management of the behaviour was frequently linked to the level of respite care provided. In some local authorities the aims of respite services and the

manner in which they are structured warrants review. The development of specialist respite services on a regional basis, may be required.

Delays in securing a residential placement was frequently cited as a factor leading to exclusion. Difficulties in securing joint funding was felt to be a contributory factor. Having a policy on the use of resources and establishing prior agreement over the way financial responsibilities will be divided, may help to address many of these difficulties. Placements of this type should be for legitimate reasons and not as a reactive responsive to breakdown in the system.

The majority of Headteachers indicated that there were no residential homes available in their locality. Hence such needs become translated into pressure on residential schooling (also Abbott et al., 2000). Many Headteachers advocated the need to look more creatively at methods of maintaining children in their local communities. Not only was this felt to be in the interest of the children concerned but also was frequently felt to be in the financial interest of the local authority.

Implications for practice include the following points:

National Government

- Given the emphasis placed on raising standards, special schools would benefit from guidance on their role in supporting pupil behaviour. Some schools are currently compromising work on behaviour, to meet curriculum demands and anticipated criticisms from OfSTED.
- Government departments need to collaborate more effectively, to ensure that policy and guidance provides a coherent framework that can facilitate developments at a local level.
- The DfES need to review the training needs of teachers and LSAs working with pupils presenting behavioural challenges.

- LSAs are also playing an increasing role in supporting pupils and their training needs to be placed on a more formal basis.
- It would be desirable to establish inter-agency agreement on the curriculum and core competencies of courses relating to challenging behaviour in order to facilitate a consistency of approach.
- The dissemination of effective practice (at a local authority, school and classroom level) in the management of pupils exhibiting challenging behaviours, might improve the standard of service to these children.
- Priority should be given to the funding of joint projects designed to support the needs of these children.
- The DfES need to set targets to reduce special school exclusions to zero. Permanent exclusions from these schools signal inadequacies in the service provided to these pupils and represent poor practice.
- The DfES need to offer special schools practical guidance on conducting risk assessments, in respect to challenging behaviour

Local Authority

- Providing a viable intervention for pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour goes beyond the remit of the school. Local authorities need to develop a corporate approach to planning services for such pupils and their families. This may also increase the overall effectiveness and efficiency of such services.
- There should be joint case management of interventions provided to children presenting challenging behaviour and their families. This should ensure that there is a comprehensive programme, a consistency of approach and no duplication of services.
- Many pupils who become excluded were identified, as needing support, from an early age. Good quality preventive support might reduce the need for more costly responses at a latter stage.

- There needs to be guidance on the partitioning of funding when placement in a residential schools is needed.
- Support services need to be more responsive to the needs of the school and family.
- Support to families appear to be inadequate in most areas of the country. A comprehensive range of services including support within the home, respite care, short-term care and long-term care arrangements is required. The need to live away from home should not necessitate the need for residential schooling.
- It is unacceptable for pupils to be excluded from respite services because of their behaviour. Services need to plan to be able to meet such needs, possibly through the development of specialist services on a regional basis.

LEA

- The pupil population in SLD schools is perceived to be developing in an ad hoc manner. LEAs need to be clear about the role envisaged for their special school provision and ensure schools have the necessary facilities, resources and skills to fulfill that function.
- Special schools require appropriate physical facilities to meet the needs of pupils placed with them. This includes the protection of space from the encroachment of competing needs.
- LEAs need to be clear about the range of need that can be met locally and that which requires accessing alternative provision.
- Placement should not be determined solely by cost but whether it represents the most appropriate option for the child. Conversely throwing resources at problems represents poor practice.
- The juxtaposition of pupils with diverse and conflicting needs is problematic. LEAs need to look to achieve a better balance of needs within SLD schools

- The LEA needs to have criteria for the placement of pupils in SLD schools. Needs which fall outside these parameters require more detailed case management.
- Some pupils may require a specialist residential placement. Establishing criteria for such placements may facilitate a proactive transfer, rather than occurring as a reactive response to a breakdown in the school placement.
- Once it is deemed to be in the child's best interest to transfer to an alternative school, the process needs to happen swiftly and schools need to be kept abreast of developments.
- Special arrangements may need to be set in place to manage deteriorating situations, pending a change of school.

School

- Staff need training that increases their competence and confidence in working with pupils who present behavioural challenges.
- Staff working with challenging pupils require access to good quality support and supervision. Formal debriefing of staff following violent incidents should receive a high priority.
- Schools need to conduct risk assessments of situations that have the potential for staff or pupils injury.
- Staff need to maintain their competence in conducting physical interventions safely and effectively.
- Headteachers need to be sensitive to the relationship between organizational arrangements, for managing challenging pupils, and staff stress.

13 CRITIQUE OF METHOD & FURTHER AVENUES FOR RESEARCH

CRITIQUE OF METHOD

The lack of existing research on this topic, limited what could be achieved. This study was essentially exploratory and limited in scope. The use of a mixed-method design appeared to be well considered. The synergy between the qualitative and quantitative approaches was evident within the study. The survey established an overview of permanent exclusion; identified schools with recent experience of exclusion and provided a focus for the interviews. The interviews complimented the survey and provided some insight into how these factors operate within the context of the school.

The survey arrangements worked well and produced a high return rate. Although the statistical analyses indicated a relationship between exclusion and characteristics relating to PMLD pupils, the strength of these were extremely weak. Moreover there were no other significant differences between excluding and non-excluding schools. However this does not imply that such relationships do not exist. Comparison was being made using fairly crude indices. Points may only arise by using more detailed data, relating to the characteristics of individual cases.

Transcribing data from questionnaire to a database inevitably introduces the probability of error. Ideally the task would be undertaken independently by several individuals and inconsistencies analyzed. The limited resources of this study did not enable this to happen. Whilst the database was checked and internal consistency explored, minor errors may have arisen.

Despite the piloting arrangements, some design weakness were also evident in the questionnaire:

- Although the exclusion data related to a five year period, the contextual information related only to the academic year 1999/2000 (e.g. number of pupils on roll). During the analysis, however, these data were used as if they applied to the whole five year period. Whilst these data are unlikely to change significantly, this cannot be relied upon. In defence of the arrangements, capturing such data was essential and respondents were unlikely to provide a more detailed response. In support of this assertion, it was invariably a detailed profile of the pupil distribution that was missing from incomplete questionnaires.
- Arrangements for recording data about individual pupils (e.g. SSD involvement) did not always enable data to be tracked by pupil. This was evident only where responses related to more than one pupil, and in reality only applied to pupils moving to alternative provision. The net result was to reduce the power with which statistical analyses could be conducted and forced some features to be reported as general summaries.
- Headteachers were given a forced choice (Yes/No), to capture information about the local context Whilst this was appropriate, it was resisted by a number of Headteachers, who elaborated on their response (e.g. "recent improvements"). Such responses were difficult to use constructively and were eliminated from some aspects of the analysis. This section could have been redesigned to avoid this problem but this had not been evident in the pilot.

The interview arrangements worked well. The interviews related only to Headteachers in the south of England. From a quantitative perspective this threatens the safety with which findings can be generalized. However, they were never intended to fulfill this function. The interviews were conducted within a qualitative paradigm and need to be judged by such criteria.

Whilst the coding and formulation of categories was conducted rigorously, so that the explanatory framework could be said to genuinely arise from the data, the approach falls short of many features deemed essential to qualify as grounded theory. Firstly, the study was restricted in scope and did not aspire to generate theory. Moreover the approach was compromised by pragmatic considerations. The simultaneous collection and analysis of the data, required to facilitate progressive focusing was not possible because of the restricted time scale. Consequently Charmaz would be critical of the dependence upon data based on one-off interviews. She feels that they lend themselves to sanitized views and provide no opportunity for theoretical sampling in order to refine ideas - "*a defining property of grounded theory*" (Charmaz, 2000, p.519).

Grounded theory also uses the concept of "*saturation*" to determine when research should end. Although it is unclear what precisely this means, it is based on the notion that new data can be accommodated within existing categories and adds nothing further to the analysis. This study fails to meet this criterion, nor is this surprising given the limited fieldwork involved. In reality many new points were continuing to emerge from the interviews. However, the nature of the overall research design needs to be born in mind. The interviews were primarily intended to provide a complimentary perspective to the survey, rather than to be judged as a self-standing element.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasize that developing models from grounded theory represents one stage in the research process. Models need to be validated, and this point generalizes to both aspects of this study. The aim was to generate a framework of Headteacher perspectives on permanent exclusion, not to verify it. Verification would require reference to other data.

Whilst there were internal consistencies within these findings, it needs to be acknowledged the study represents a one-sided picture of this phenomenon. The way in which Headteachers framed issues inevitably set their actions in a

positive light. The assertion that moving a pupil to more specialized placement was in the best interest of the child, is a case in point, and is open to alternative interpretation. At issue however is the focus of this study. It was primarily directed at identifying the perspectives of Headteachers. It is difficult to determine how far these can be challenged without imposing a different frame of reference on what is being described. Challenging these views with reference to other sources would however help to clarify the issue.

FURTHER AVENUES FOR RESEARCH

This study suggested a range of issues that warrant further attention:

- Not only is permanent exclusion from SLD schools poorly researched but this also applies to other types of special schools. There is evidence that the trend in exclusions from special schools are modeling those in the mainstream sector (DfEE, 2001). This however, did not apply to SLD schools. It follows therefore, that other types of special schools must be responsible and poses questions about the processes involved. One possible hypothesis is that the trend is caused by pupils excluded from mainstream schools, cascading through and out of the special school system. If valid, such an explanation would raise important questions about the ability of the education system to work effectively with pupils presenting behavioural challenges, within either inclusive or segregated contexts. Osler et al. (2001) queries whether exclusion from special schools is ever appropriate. This study emphasize the need to look more closely at exclusion from other types of special schools.
- The study identified a significant increase in the reported movement of pupils presenting behavioural challenges to alternative provision.

As this issue had not been a focus of this study, what is actually happening remains in doubt. It is unclear what constitutes alternative provision: it could indicate that pupils are either transferring to other local special schools or to residential schools. Both possibilities have important implications for practice. A transfer to local special schools has no obvious logic and raises questions about the accuracy of initial assessment and placements. An increase in the use of residential schooling is counter to perceived trends in LEA placements. This however, is an aspect of education that has been given inadequate attention. Neither the DfEE nor the DoH currently collect information on such placements. A point criticized by (Utting, 1997).

- A related question is why pupils with a SLD are placed in residential schools. This study identified a lack of local respite and residential provision, and poses the question as to whether these factors might be related to the use made of residential schools. Abbott et al. (2000) failed to establish a link between expenditure on respite services and pressure on residential placements. However, there are inconsistencies in the way both factors are recorded.
- A further issue is whether the view that a child requires a '*24 hour curriculum*' (residency) represents a valid educational argument. There appears to be a hardening of attitudes against the use of placements on these grounds. This may however may be motivated more by financial expediency, rather than educational need.
- Whilst a recommendations was for LEAs to have an overt policy about the use of residential schools, it begs questions about what such schools actually offer. What are the relative cost benefits of a residential placement or maintaining a pupil locally, and how do these factors change in relation to different circumstances?
- A theme running through this study was the perception that the range of need being expected to be catered for in an SLD schools was

becoming increasingly diverse. Headteachers were further implying that this compromised their ability to manage challenging behaviour. Both points warrant closer inspection. One possibility is that trying to manage a diverse range of needs may reduce the self-efficacy of staff and hence undermine their confidence in managing behaviour. In addition, a diverse population raises issues about the best organizational arrangements to respond to such needs. With the trend towards the establishment of complex learning difficulties schools, such issues are likely to have increased prominence.

- An issue was the stress experienced by staff working with pupils presenting behavioural challenges. Whilst there has been recent interest in this issue within the adult learning disability sector, it has received inadequate attention within the school context. The relationship between stress and organizational arrangements (Porter and Lacey, 1999), effective models of staff support and the most effective approaches to staff training warrant further investigation. Hastings and Brown (in press) suggests that self-efficacy is the key to reduce such staff stress. This poses questions about the most effective methods of providing training and support.

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15 APPENDICES

Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN & RATIONALE

Basic school data

It was necessary to establish whether respondents met the criteria for the study (i.e. was the Headteacher of a day SLD school). This was done by asking for details about the official DfEE designation, type of school (i.e. day or boarding) and the age range of the pupils on roll.

Male (1996) indicated that some SLD schools have been involved in recent reorganizations. Equally the status of the longitudinal data needs to be viewed in relation to changes that may have occurred within the school over that time period. This prompted general questions about any significant changes that have effected the school.

Information about prevalence can be viewed more meaningfully as a proportion of the SLD population. Consequently the questionnaire gathered information about the number and distribution of pupils on the roll of each school.

Contents

Research on exclusions from mainstream schools identified a number of issues and led to questions addressing the following issues:

1. **Gender**. There is a significant bias towards boys being permanently excluded from mainstream schools (DfE, 1992b; DfE, 1993a; Imich, 1994; Parsons et al., 1995; Hayden, Sheppard, and Ward, 1996; Mitchell, 1996; Imich, 1996; Castle and Parsons, 1997; Godfrey and Parsons, 1998; DfEE, 1998a; DfEE, 451/98, DfEE, 1999a; DfEE,2000a), although the reason for this is not well addressed in the literature.
2. **Level of staffing & class size**. The level of staffing within the school and average class size both have face validity as variables which may have a bearing on how well schools are able to address challenging behavior.

3. **Percentage of challenging behaviour**. Male (1996b) noted that SLD school's have perceived an increase in the number of children with behavioural needs over recent years. This consequently may provide an index of the school's perception of the level of difficulty they are facing. The emphasis here is on their perception; whether this is true is a separate issue.
4. **Profile over time**. The main impetus for research on exclusion from mainstream schools has been prompted by the increasing numbers during the 1990's (DfE, 1992b; DfE, 1993a; Imich, 1994; Parsons et al.,1995; Godfrey and Parsons, 1998). The same trend has also been attributed to special schools more generally(Imich,1994; Parsons et al.,1995; Godfrey and Parsons, 1998) . Headteachers were asked to provide retrospective estimate of numbers in order to explore whether such trends apply to SLD schools. It is acknowledged that there will be a greater probability of error in information obtained in this way and it will need to be treated with some caution. Retrieving such data from other sources however was not a viable option.
5. **Age distribution of exclusions**. Headteachers were asked to identify the Key Stage the child was in at the point of exclusion. Data from mainstream schools indicates that exclusion predominantly relates to secondary aged pupils (DfE, 1992b; DfEE, 1998a; Godfrey and Parsons, 1998; DfEE, 1999a: DfEE, 2000a) and that the modal age for lies within the last three years of this phase (DfE, 1992b; DfEE, 1998a).
6. **Social Services involvement.** Research has identified a strong correlation between Social Services involvement and exclusion (Galloway, 1982; Stirling, 1992; Maginnis, 1993; Parsons et al., 1994a; Firth, 1995; SSI/OfSTED, 1995; Ofsted, 1996; Robinson, 1998; Gold, 1999). Again the way in which these variables are related is less clear. Inter-agency collaboration is probably a more critical variable within the SLD sector. There is evidence (Mental Health Foundation, 1997) that even where the Local Authority is clear about the action that needs to be taken inter-agency disagreement over areas of financial responsibility can generate an obstacle to action.
7. **Outcomes**. The outcomes of permanent exclusion, was felt to provide information about the impact of exclusion on children and their families. It could also provide insight into the intention of schools (or whether the intended outcome is realized in practice).

8. **Reasons for exclusion.** There would appear to be significant differences between mainstream and special schools in the pressures to exclude. Mainstream schools often express a need (valid or otherwise) to maintain authority over pupils in order to prevent a wider breach of discipline (NUT, 1992; DfE, 1993a; Blythe and Milner, 1994; Imich, 1994; Mitchell, 1996). This does not seem as relevant within SLD schools. An open-ended section was included to gauge Headteacher perspectives on this.
9. **Triggering behaviours.** The behaviours which lead to the exclusion may have implications for understanding the schools motivation (NUT, 1992; DfE, 1993a; Imich, 1994; Mitchell, 1996; Ofsted, 1996; Castle and Parsons, 1997). Again an open-ended section was consequently included.
10. **Inappropriate placements.** Male (1996 a/b) notes that special schools actually cater for different populations, depending on local variables. One of the issues she raised was whether there were children who schools felt were inappropriately placed (for whatever reason). This could make them more vulnerable to exclusion, if for no other reason than school's failure to take full responsibility for them.
11. **Changes in the characteristics of pupils.** Male (1996b) identified that many headteachers perceived their school population as becoming increasingly more complex. It consequently seemed appropriate to determine whether schools felt there were changes in the pupil population and the nature of such changes. It also provided an opportunity for schools to include data which might have implications for the integrity of the longitudinal data
12. **School ethos.** One of the possible indicators of whether schools are likely to exclude may relate to the ethos of the school. Section 8 of the questionnaire was intended to explore their views on maintaining children with more difficult behaviours on roll.
13. **Reasons.** Section 9 of the questionnaire identifies issues, which may provide the rationale for exclusion. The section was designed to determine the relative importance Headteachers assign to these issues.
14. **Specialist placements.** Section 10 explores Headteacher perceptions about specialist residential placements. Schools which are more positive about such options, may be more likely to pursue them either through re-Statementing or excluding children.

Appendix B

ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE PILOTING OF THE QUESTIONAIRRE

It was necessary to contact seven of the 20 schools used in the pilot, as they had provided insufficient details in some sections of the questionnaire.

The issue causing most difficulty was the estimated proportion of pupils felt to exhibit challenging behaviour. Pro-rating these figures to the total survey indicates that this would represent approximately 130 schools. This would consequently be a significant problem. The question was re-written in order to encourage schools to provide an estimate.

One school failed to supply details about the number of children on roll. This seemed an oversight rather than a weakness in design.

One school rang to explain that they had been unsure how to respond. Whilst a pupil presenting behavioural difficulties had transferred to an independent residential provision school it had been on the basis of parental request, rather than at the initiation of the school. Schools need to be asked to include details irrespective of the placement dynamics.

An important flaw in design related to the number of teachers and support assistants. It was unclear from the wording whether this was the actual number of people or full-time equivalent (FTE). One headteacher also pointed out that Form 7M (special schools), which is returned to the DfEE as part of the school's census, contains similar information and reference to this might clarify the intention.

Feedback also indicated that:

1. The questionnaire could be completed relatively quickly.
2. Sections 2-4 seemed to obtain the data intended.
3. Section 5 and 6 produced identical information (i.e. the behaviour was typically deemed to be synonymous with the reason for exclusion). The 'behaviour' section was

consequently moved before the 'reason' section in order to highlight the distinction. Section 5 was also rewritten to encourage a broader pattern of responses.

4. There was little written response in any of the open-ended sections. At best only five abbreviated bullet points were given.
5. Most schools failed to respond at all to Section 7. This could be because they do not perceive there to be any misplaced children, although this would be at odds with Male's (1996) findings. the space taken on this issue was reduced and restructured to provide tick-box options.
6. Section 8 worked well.

Section 9 and 10

Section 9 and 10 warranted modification. As all of the issues derive from research relating to mainstream schools, most are relevant to some degree. Introducing more contentious issues could produced a breadth of response.

The scaling also caused difficulty. I had intended converting responses to a number rating in order to facilitate collation but some schools failed to tick any of the options provided. This was a legitimate response given the wording of the descriptors but it is unclear what information is being conveyed. It could indicate either that the item was of no significance or that the headteacher strongly disagreed. This would have implications for the weightings used in the collation. In the SHA (1992) survey on exclusion, a five point Likert Scale was used. Headteachers rate statements from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" with zero being the mid-point indicating little feeling either way. This type of structure was felt to provide a better option.

Appendix C

NATIONAL SURVEY:
PERMANENT EXCLUSION FROM SLD SCHOOLS

1 SCHOOL DETAILS

Local Education Authority	Number of teachers (full-time equivalent):
What is the **official** DfEE designation of your school (e.g. SLD):	Number of assistants (full-time equivalent):
Type of school (e.g. Day or Boarding):	Number of classes in the school:

Number of pupils currently on roll:

	Pre-School	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	Post 16
Boys:						
Girls:						

I acknowledge that the following questions cannot be answered accurately (and will be dependent on definition) BUT what proportion of your school population would you estimate to:

- *have profound and multiple learning difficulties*
- *exhibit challenging behaviour*

Please tick the box that best describes your circumstances:

	Yes	*No*
Do you attempt to meet the needs of children exhibiting the most challenging behaviour in a segregated class provision (i.e. rather than with the normal class context)?		
Are the majority of your PMLD pupils integrated with their peer group?		
Do you feel the number of children you are catering for who exhibit challenging behaviour has increased recently? *If "yes" please explain why you feel this to be the case*		
Do you feel you have any pupils who would be more appropriately placed elsewhere, on *grounds of their behaviour? If "yes" please explain why you feel this to be the case*		

If the information about your school has changed significantly in recent years and may be misleading, please provide further details (e.g. numbers have increased significantly since 1996):

2 LOCAL CONTEXT

To the best of your knowledge:

	Yes	*No*
Does your LEA have a residential school for children with SLDs who exhibit challenging behaviour?		
Does the local Social Services Department have a residential facility for children with SLDs who exhibit challenging behaviour?		
Does your LEA have a policy defining the criteria under which pupils with behavioural difficulties would be considered for residential provision?		
Do you feel Education, Social Services and Health work collaboratively to support pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour?		
Are the respite needs of parents with children exhibiting challenging behaviour well addressed in your local authority?		
Is there good collaboration between Education, Social Services and Health over the joint funding of residential placements?		

3 PREVALENCE

How many pupils have left your school on grounds of their behaviour in the past 5 years? Please write the number of pupils in each category. (*I acknowledge that pupils may transfer to alternative provision for a variety of reasons, including pressure from parents because of home-based difficulties - such cases should be included*):

	1994/5	1995/6	1996/7	1997/8	1998/9
Permanent exclusion					
Alternative placement					

Note: If you have not recorded any pupils in Section 3 above - go directly to Section 6 entitled "**Reasons**"

4 PUPIL DETAILS - This section relates solely to pupils recorded in section 3

What gender were the pupils concerned? (*Please write the number of pupils in each category*)

	Male	Female
Permanent exclusion		
Alternative placement		

What was the age range of the pupils concerned? (*Please write the number of pupils in each category*)

	Pre-School	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	*Post 16*
Permanent exclusion						
Alternative placement						

What level of contact did social services have prior to exclusion or the change of placement, compared with the majority of pupils in the school? (*Please write the number of pupils in each category*)

	Significantly below average	Less than average	Average	More than average	Significantly greater
Permanent exclusion					
Alternative placement					

What level of support was provided to the family?

	No Respite	Occasional respite	Regular respite	Weekly boarding	In full time care
Permanent exclusion					
Alternative placement					

5 OUTCOME - This section only applies if you have permanently excluded a pupil

Which category best describes the main form of provision made for individual pupils in the first 6 months following the exclusion. (*Please write the number of pupils in each category*)

At home with no educational support	
At home with some educational input	
Alternative day special school	
A residential special school	
Health or SSD facility (Day)	
Health or SSD facility (Residential)	

Other: *Please supply further details*	

NOTE: *Please indicate your views in the following sections, irrespective of whether you have ever permanently excluded a pupil.*

6 REASONS

What do you anticipate would be the key reasons which would force you to consider permanently excluding a child? *Give as many or as few reasons as appropriate:*

Many permanent exclusions from SLD schools appear to relate to pupils over the age of 16 years. Why do you think this is the case?

	Yes	*No*
Do you feel the number of exclusions in SLD schools are generally increasing		
If "yes" please explain why you feel this to be the case		

7 MANAGING PUPILS EXHIBITING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

How significant do you feel the following issues are in relation to pupils who present more challenging behaviours?

	Very significant	Fairly significant	Neutral	Fairly insignificant	Not relevant
Limited availability of physical space (i.e. rooms) presents significant problems in successfully meeting their needs.					
Staff are reluctant to tolerate the physical demands of managing large pupils presenting challenging behaviour.					
An inability to bring about a change in the pupils behaviour rapidly erodes the confidence of staff.					
The National Curriculum has made it more difficult to meet the needs of pupils presenting challenging behaviour.					
Integrating pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) within the school has complicated the schools ability to manage pupils presenting challenging behaviour.					
Once the confidence of staff to manage the pupil has been eroded it is almost impossible for the child to continue at the school.					
Where parents have difficulty in maintaining acceptable boundaries of behaviour the school can do little to resolve the behavioural needs of the pupil.					

What are your views on maintaining children who present significant behavioural challenges within your school?

8 FACTORS

The following factors have been identified in research conducted on mainstream schools. How significant do you feel these factors are likely to be in determining whether an SLD school might permanently exclude a child? *(Please tick the appropriate response for each statement)*

	Very significant	Fairly significant	Neutral	Fairly insignificant	Not relevant
To force the LEA to provide the additional resourcing.					
To secure better guidance or advice on behaviour management.					
To facilitate the school being able to meet the educational needs of the other pupils.					
To place pressure on the child's parents to support the school's intervention strategy more effectively.					
To protect the physical well-being of staff.					
To alleviate the anxiety expressed by the parents of other pupils.					
To break the deadlock associated with inadequate levels of support to meet home needs (e.g. respite provision).					
To maintain authority over pupils in order to prevent a wider breach of discipline.					
To enable the child to receive a curriculum more suited to his/her needs					
To secure a transfer to a more specialist provision (e.g. a residential special school).					
To secure an early adult placement (eg the child being considered to have grown out of school).					
To resolve the inability of agencies (Health, Social Services & Education) to provide an appropriately integrated package of care for the child.					
To protect other pupils in the school from physical harm.					
To protect the emotional well-being of staff.					
To overcome the failure of the LEA to respond more rapidly to the needs of the school.					
To overcome the bureaucratic obstacles to placing pupils residentially.					

9 RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT

How well do the following reflect your views on residential school placements for children exhibiting severe challenging behaviour?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The needs of all pupils could be met locally if adequate resources were made available.					
There will always be some children for whom a residential placement presents the best option					

Can you elaborate on your response to the questions above?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. The time you have given this task is greatly appreciated.

Roger Norgate

Local Education Office
Clarendon House,
Winchester,
Hampshire.
SO22 5PW

Appendix D -

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

13th August 1999

Dear Headteacher,

Permanent Exclusions from SLD schools

I am currently undertaking a doctorate with the Open University. My dissertation relates to the permanent exclusion of pupils from schools for children with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) (i.e. on grounds of their behaviour).

There has been much research recently on the relationship between the number of exclusions from mainstream schools and changes in national policy. However, as is often the case, there is little information about how this applies to SLD schools. A survey for the DfEE (Parsons et al., 1995) suggested that the increase in exclusions evident within mainstream schools, was being mirrored within the special school sector overall. Whether the same factors are involved is a moot point.

I would be grateful if you could find some time to complete the enclosed questionnaire. This will form part of a national survey of all SLD schools in England and will be the first of its kind. Needless to say, all the information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and no individuals, schools or LEAs will be identified or identifiable in the final report

The validity of my study will depend, in part, on having an adequate number of questionnaires returned. I can appreciate that you will have competing pressures on your time and thank you, in anticipation, for your help in this matter. If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Roger Norgate
Senior Educational Psychologist
MSc, CPsychol, ABPsS

Tel: 01962 876232
E-mail: edepwrrn@hantsnet.hants.gov.uk

Appendix D

FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Local Education Office,
Clarendon House,
Winchester,
Hampshire.
SO22 5PW

1st November 1998

Dear Headteacher,

Permanent Exclusion from SLD schools

I wrote to you in September and apologize in advance for troubling you again.

I am currently undertaking a doctorate with the Open University. As you may well be aware this entails five years of study whilst working full time. My work is exclusively with SLD schools and focuses primarily on the management of challenging behaviour.

My dissertation is on the factors leading to pupils with behavioural difficulties being permanently excluded from SLD schools. Like many aspects of research there is much interest in the mainstream sector but no existing data at all relating to SLD schools.

I can appreciate that there are many competing pressures on your time but I am conducting a national survey of all SLD schools and would be grateful if you could spare a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire. It genuinely takes very little time and it is important that I gain as much information as possible. I would assure you that all the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and no individuals, schools or LEAs will be identified in the final report.

Thank you for any assistance you can provide. If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Roger Norgate

Tel: 01962 876232
e-mail: edepwrrn@hantsnet.hants.gov.uk

Appendix D -

LETTER REQUESTING AN INTERVIEW

Local Education Office,
Clarendon House,
Winchester,
Hampshire.
SO22 5PW

1st May 2000

Dear Headteacher,

Permanent Exclusions from SLD schools

As you may recall from earlier correspondence, I am currently attempting to complete a doctorate with the Open University. My dissertation relates to the permanent exclusion of pupils from schools for children with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD). This research was prompted by my long involvement with SLD schools, my interest in challenging behaviour and the lack of existing research in this area.

Can I thank you for completing the questionnaire I circulated in September. Overall I received a 75% response and am grateful for your contribution. Can I "*push my luck*" by imposing further on your goodwill. As well as the national survey, I am hoping to interview five headteachers and would be grateful if you would consider being one of them. To enable you to make an informed decision I will attempt to outline what I have in mind.

Firstly I can appreciate that you have many competing demands on your time. If you do not want to be troubled further just contact my secretary on 01962-876232 and I will not press you further.

If I do not hear from you, I will contact you before half-term and, if you are happy to be involved, establish a mutually convenient time for me to visit your school in the second half of the summer term. My aim would be to explore your views on why, in some exceptional cases, placements breakdown and lead to a permanent exclusion or transfer to alternative provision. In reality the interview is likely to take 75-90 minutes. I would also like to record the interview, in order to be able to analyze the data more formally and to establish supportive evidence for my dissertation. I can appreciate that recording the interview may raise some anxieties. I would assure you that any information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. I am the only person who will have access to the tape and it will be destroyed at the end of the study. In addition no individuals, schools or LEAs will ultimately be identified or identifiable in the final report. It is also deemed good practice, to send you a copy of the transcript in order to enable you to check the accuracy of the information being used.

Can I thank you for considering this request. If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me. If (after all these off-putting details) you are still willing to participate, I look forward to meeting you in the summer. I will also provide you with some feedback from the national survey during the course of the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

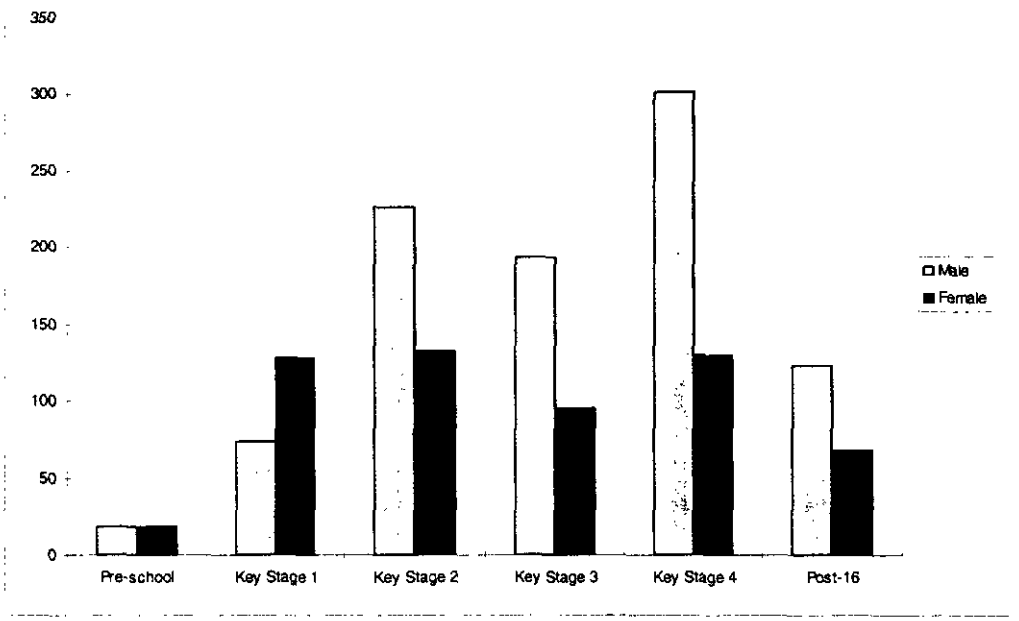
Roger Norgate
Senior Educational Psychologist
MSc, CPsychol, ABPsS

Tel: 01962-876232 E-mail: edepwrrn@hantsnet.hants.gov.uk

Appendix E

STATISTICAL ANALYSES

Figure E.1 : Graph showing an estimate of the distribution of pupils transferring to alternative provision by gender and Key Stage per10,000 pupils (n=208).



Note: The figures above are based on pro-rated data as it was not possible to reliably discriminate by Key Stage and gender. The data is consequently approximate rather than accurate.

Figure E.2: Table recording the outcome of Pearson correlations exploring the relationship between ratings in the survey ($r < 0.5$)

Variable	Variable	r =
To force the LEA to provide the additional resourcing.	To secure better guidance or advice on behaviour management.	0.531
To force the LEA to provide the additional resourcing.	To break the deadlock associated with inadequate levels of support to meet home needs (e.g. respite provision).	0.554
To force the LEA to provide the additional resourcing.	To overcome the failure of the LEA to respond more rapidly to the needs of the school.	0.581
To secure better guidance or advice on behaviour management.	To break the deadlock associated with inadequate levels of support to meet home needs (e.g. respite provision).	0.515
To place pressure on the child's parents to support the school's intervention strategy more effectively.	To break the deadlock associated with inadequate levels of support to meet home needs (e.g. respite provision).	0.574
To protect the physical well-being of staff.	To protect the emotional well-being of staff.	0.583
To break the deadlock associated with inadequate levels of support to meet home needs (e.g. respite provision).	To resolve the inability of agencies (Health, Social Services & Education) to provide an appropriately integrated package of care for the child.	0.676
To break the deadlock associated with inadequate levels of support to meet home needs (e.g. respite provision).	To overcome the failure of the LEA to respond more rapidly to the needs of the school.	0.547
To overcome the failure of the LEA to respond more rapidly to the needs of the school.	To overcome the bureaucratic obstacles to placing pupils residentially.	0.558
To secure an early adult placement (eg the child being considered to have grown out of school).	To resolve the inability of agencies (Health, Social Services & Education) to provide an appropriately integrated package of care for the child.	0.549
To secure a transfer to a more specialist provision (e.g. a residential special school).	To overcome the bureaucratic obstacles to placing pupils residentially.	0.557
To resolve the inability of agencies (Health, Social Services & Education) to provide an appropriately integrated package of care for the child.	To overcome the failure of the LEA to respond more rapidly to the needs of the school.	0.551
To resolve the inability of agencies (Health, Social Services & Education) to provide an appropriately integrated package of care for the child.	To overcome the bureaucratic obstacles to placing pupils residentially.	0.546
To overcome the failure of the LEA to respond more rapidly to the needs of the school.	To overcome the bureaucratic obstacles to placing pupils residentially.	0.719

Note: All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Factor Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
BREAK_DEAD	.41	1.206	204
RESOURCES	.82	1.088	204
TOO_SLOW	.48	1.048	204
AGENCY_INT	.61	1.209	204
OBSTACLES_	.35	1.101	204
ADVICE	.37	1.206	204
PARENTAL_S	-.02	1.166	204
ADULT_PLAC	.41	1.139	204
RESIDENTIA	1.08	.999	204
AUTHORITY	-.69	1.132	204
EMOTIONAL	1.15	.932	204
WELL_BEING	1.45	.789	204
PROTECT_CH	1.77	.553	204
PMLD	.35	1.272	204
PARENTAL_P	.80	.968	204
OTHER_PUPI	1.36	.759	204
CHANGE	.52	.965	204
STAFFRELUC	.73	1.014	204
STAFFCONF	.47	1.176	204
NC	.18	1.321	204
PHYSICAL_S	.07	.262	204
PARENTAL	.92	1.751	204
CURRICULUM	.91	1.198	204

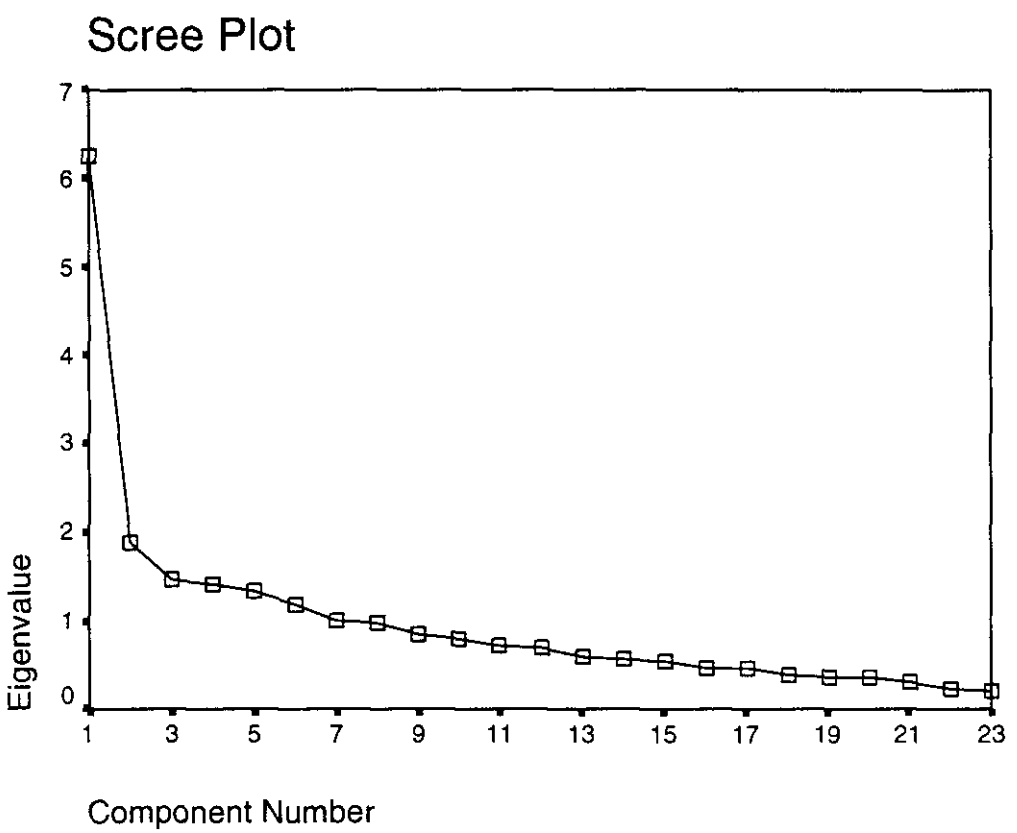
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.831
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1552.928
	df	253
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.251	27.177	27.177	6.251	27.177	27.177	5.200	22.607	22.607
2	1.885	8.194	35.371	1.885	8.194	35.371	2.607	11.333	33.940
3	1.459	6.342	41.713	1.459	6.342	41.713	1.788	7.773	41.713
4	1.416	6.158	47.871						
5	1.328	5.773	53.643						
6	1.173	5.098	58.742						
7	1.012	4.398	63.140						
8	.972	4.224	67.364						
9	.846	3.677	71.040						
10	.790	3.433	74.473						
11	.719	3.125	77.598						
12	.690	3.000	80.598						
13	.590	2.564	83.162						
14	.562	2.444	85.606						
15	.533	2.315	87.921						
16	.465	2.022	89.943						
17	.451	1.961	91.904						
18	.388	1.689	93.592						
19	.371	1.613	95.205						
20	.355	1.545	96.750						
21	.313	1.362	98.112						
22	.241	1.048	99.160						
23	.193	.840	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.



Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component		
	1	2	3
BREAK_DEAD	.809	6.470E-02	9.345E-02
RESOURCES	.735	-5.31E-03	.135
TOO_SLOW	.730	.241	9.656E-02
AGENCY_INT	.723	.178	3.697E-02
OBSTACLES_	.723	.300	-3.17E-02
ADVICE	.699	5.802E-02	.115
PARENTAL_S	.681	-5.41E-04	.177
ADULT_PLAC	.590	.215	-9.22E-02
RESIDENTIA	.532	.323	-.221
AUTHORITY	.474	5.872E-03	.178
EMOTIONAL	.200	.621	.345
WELL_BEING	.106	.584	.258
PROTECT_CH	.140	.555	7.781E-02
PMLD	1.746E-02	.482	-2.76E-02
PARENTAL_P	.369	.467	.172
OTHER_PUPI	.328	.407	-.114
CHANGE	.230	9.538E-02	.721
STAFFRELUC	7.483E-02	.107	.708
STAFFCONF	-7.33E-03	.183	.513
NC	.227	.382	9.144E-02
PHYSICAL_S	-.102	.335	1.722E-02
PARENTAL	6.746E-02	.324	9.275E-02
CURRICULUM	.423	.447	-.282

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Component Transformation Matrix

Component	1	2	3
1	.873	.454	.177
2	-.450	.614	.648
3	-.186	.646	-.740

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Correlations

Correlations

		Force provision resources	Secure advice	Press parental support	Staff physical	Force support to home	Early adult placement	Facilitate transfer to residential	Secure better integrated support	Emotional well being staff	Support too slow	Remove obstacles to residential
Force provision resources	Pearson Correlation	1	.531**	.431**	.131	.554**	.297**	.326**	.422**	.257**	.581**	.476**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.060	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	207
Secure advice	Pearson Correlation	.531**	1	.498**	.198**	.515**	.277**	.247**	.410**	.193**	.496**	.428**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.004	.000	.000	.000	.000	.005	.000	.000
	N	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	207
Press parental support	Pearson Correlation	.431**	.498**	1	.157*	.574**	.257**	.225**	.430**	.152*	.433**	.394**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.024	.000	000	.001	.000	.028	.000	.000
	N	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	207
Staff physical	Pearson Correlation	.131	.198**	.157*	1	.220**	.094	.092	.157*	.583**	.267**	.250**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.060	.004	.024	.	.001	179	.184	.023	.000	.000	.000
	N	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	207
Force support to home	Pearson Correlation	.554**	.515**	.574**	.220**	1	.431**	.366**	.676**	.263**	.547**	.558**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.001	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	207
Early adult placement	Pearson Correlation	.297**	.277**	.257**	.094	.431**	1	.474**	.549**	.233**	.440**	.498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.179	.000	.	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000
	N	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	207
Facilitate transfer to residential	Pearson Correlation	.326**	.247**	.225**	.092	.366**	.474**	1	.411**	.140*	.415**	.557**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.184	.000	.000	.	.000	.044	.000	.000
	N	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	207
Secure better integrated support	Pearson Correlation	.422**	.410**	.430**	.157*	.676**	.549**	.411**	1	.291**	.551**	.546**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.023	.000	.000	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	207
Emotional well being staff	Pearson Correlation	.257**	.193**	.152*	.583**	.263**	.233**	.140*	.291**	1	.403**	.324**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.005	.028	.000	.000	.001	.044	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	207
Support too slow	Pearson Correlation	.581**	.496**	.433**	.267**	.547**	440**	.415**	.551**	.403**	1	.719**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	208	207
Remove obstacles to residential	Pearson Correlation	.476**	.428**	.394**	.250**	.558**	.498**	.557**	.546**	.324**	.719**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	207	207	207	207	207	207	207	207	207	207	207

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

CHI-Squared analyses

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Joint funding locally * Good local colaboration	208	100.0%	0	.0%	208	100.0%

Joint funding locally * Good local colaboration Crosstabulation

			Good local colaboration		
			Poor local collaboration	Good local collaboration	Total
Joint funding locally	Poor joint funding	Count	128	29	157
		Expected Count	114.0	43.0	157.0
	Good joint funding	Count	23	28	51
		Expected Count	37.0	14.0	51.0
Total		Count	151	57	208
		Expected Count	151.0	57.0	208.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.681[b]	1	.000		
Continuity Correction[a]	23.883	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	23.841	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	25.558	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	208				

a. Computed only for a 2x2 table

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.98.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.351	.000
	Cramer's V	.351	.000
N of Valid Cases		208	

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Joint funding locally * Support to parents	208	100.0%	0	.0%	208	100.0%

Joint funding locally * Support to parents Crosstabulation

			Support to parents		
			Poor support to parents	Good support to parents	Total
Joint funding locally	Poor joint funding	Count	145	12	157
		Expected Count	134.4	22.6	157.0
	Good joint funding	Count	33	18	51
		Expected Count	43.6	7.4	51.0
Total		Count	178	30	208
		Expected Count	178.0	30.0	208.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.846[b]	1	.000		
Continuity Correction[a]	21.658	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	20.635	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	23.731	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	208				

a. Computed only for a 2x2 table

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.36.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.339	.000
	Cramer's V	.339	.000
N of Valid Cases		208	

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Either excluded or altprov * IntegratePMLD	208	100.0%	0	.0%	208	100.0%

Either excluded or altprov * IntegratePMLD Crosstabulation

			IntegratePMLD		
			PMLD not integrated	PMLD integrated	Total
Either excluded or altprov	No pupils excluded or alt prov	Count	28	40	68
		Expected Count	21.6	46.4	68.0
	Pupils excluded or alt prov	Count	38	102	140
		Expected Count	44.4	95.6	140.0
Total		Count	66	142	208
		Expected Count	66.0	142.0	208.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.161[b]	1	.041		
Continuity Correction[a]	3.538	1	.060		
Likelihood Ratio	4.078	1	.043		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.985
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.141	1	.042		
N of Valid Cases	208				

a. Computed only for a 2x2 table

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 21.58.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.141	.041
	Cramer's V	.141	.041
N of Valid Cases		208	

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

T-Test results

Group Statistics

	IfExcluded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
%PMLD	1.00	62	26.097	13.5356	1.7190
	.00	146	31.120	17.0284	1.4093

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
%PMLD	Equal variances assumed	2.200	.140	-2.062	206	.041	-5.023	2.4365	-9.8268	-.2194
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.260	143.316	.025	-5.023	2.2229	-9.4169	-.6293

Appendix F

EXAMPLES OF THE TRANSCRIPTION, CODING AND COLLATION OF THE INTERVIEW DATA.

F.1 TRANSCRIPTION

RN: Do you feel SLD schools are under more pressure to exclude?

HT2: I think SLD schools are now under more pressure not to exclude. I think currently the LEAs see the SLD school as probably the last line of defence, and often they will put unjustified levels of resources in there to maintain a child in education, and sometimes it doesn't matter how much resourcing you put in there, the child that you are having the problem with, they have overrun their time in that school. So I think the special schools are under, the SLD schools are under more pressure not to exclude.

RN: Why is that?

HT2: On the one hand the next step out, usually an out county residential placement is going to be expensive, it goes against the trends these days for inclusion and as a first step lets include all the pupils in the county within education in the county, not necessarily within mainstream education in the county.

RN: Why do you feel some children have "*overrun their time*" and the school is no longer appropriate for them?

HT2: For those who have perhaps been in the school for a number of years, they will have used up the personal resources of the staff. They'll have worn them down, and moved onto somebody else and worn them down, and finally run out of people. I also think that in any group of children, no matter how much you pay somebody, they're not obliged to get on with every one of them, which is where schools like this have an advantage over parents for instance, if I come to the end of my tether with little Johnny I can now pass him into somebody else. By the time they come to the end of their tether hopefully I will have recharged my batteries and I can take over again. The poor parents

don't have this option. So within a school it could be that a child that is presenting challenges has a shorter life span with that group of people because they wear the people down more quickly, whereas the same child in a different setting could click, could be better, could interact better with the staff there for whatever reason, and there's nothing you can define or describe or identify. And so the child's placement in another school, exactly the same specifications, would succeed.

RN: You're suggesting staff morale and confidence to stay engaged with a kid is critical to the success of the intervention?

HT2: And its personal qualities of the staff, its something you can't train in. You can train the qualifications in but you can't train the qualities in. Attitudes, beliefs, values, this sort of thing.

RN: Messy stuff isn't it?

HT2: Oh yes. You can't pin it down.

F.2 INFORMAL CODING

Transcript	Initial Coding
52. So there is flexibility, risk assessment, putting people where they're needed to keep things safe. - *Yes, and it's a far better way of working than I feel, stereotypical model of my classroom, my children, my welfare system. Which is a static thing. And also.....*	PMLD integration - teaching team adds flexibility plus *risk assessment, staffing.*
53. And your problem - *Exactly, exactly. You've hit it on the head. And the other huge issue too, which we have found, and this is again reflected in the senior part of the school, is that a confrontation, well we don't have them (I lie they happen some times) but potential confrontation can be avoided because the youngster has had during his 25 minutes lesson with a particular team, and then they will move on, to do social language, to maths, or from maths to the activity room. So then there's that moment of being able to step down, faces being saved, feathers being smoothed, and off you go again into a new setting, old behaviour left behind. And we find that really does work. Not always, but the if the child's particularly distressed the behaviour may trail them through the day, but as a general rule, we can usually diffuse things in that way. And everybody's face is saved, particularly adults.*	PMLD integration - teaching team also leads to shared responsibility. PMLD integration - teaching team and changing lessons also helps break-up potential confrontations - face saving CB- importance of letting staff save face.

54. The adults are quite critical to what happens in respect to challenging behaviours. - *They certainly are, yes. The work we've done with dinner ladies, caretaker, school administrators on not being judgmental, not being confrontational, but at the same time, having very firm framework and structures in place, very firm expectations of what we will achieve and what we will not. Which is a difficult balance to get always, particularly with dinner ladies.....*	CB - importance of whole school approach including ancillary staff - dinner ladies, caretaker, school administrators
55. Interestingly .....In all sectors of education! - *Yes.*	
56. I think there's split views currently about whether challenging behaviour children should be segregated into a class or educated within the main body of the school. What are your views on that? *Is this one of your naïve questions? That, well can I share this with you because it is confidential but when I came to this school my predecessor had a system whereby she had very serious behaviour, yes, contained in one classroom, which was a sin bin, it was a totally degrading non educational punitive experience, not people beating each other but just punitive because of the behaviour that took place. And not only that, but any teacher who had possibly fallen out with my predecessor was placed in that group for at least the next year. So you know, it is the schools history that I felt that this is not a very positive way forward, need I say more!*	CB integrated/segregated - segregation degrading for staff and pupils Peripheral issue - CB segregated used to manage staff
57. I am happy with that.....*You must have come across that before!*	

58. Absolutely. - *But you see again, getting back to the way we work in a team, you see, that doesn't need to happen. You don't have to have a sin bin with disaffected kids with challenging behaviour getting a lower and lower negative spiral, because you can meet those needs if you treat them flexibly within the team.*	CB integrated/segregated - can lead to negative spiral.
59. Shared responsibility for action. - *And nobody's to blame for an individual child's behaviour because there's a huge issue around that.*	CB - whole school issue

60. We touched on social services and health responsibility issues. What's your feeling about the levels of respite care, residential placements. - *Totally inadequate. I'm sorry that was a throw away but realistically they are inadequate. But then I do have some concerns that if there was a significantly more respite, there is then a ducking of parental responsibility as well, and it worries me then that parents actually lose ownership about the programmes and the management of their own children sometimes. That does worry me. And its all too easy to off-load those responsibilities because the professionals know better, that concerns me a bit. But I don't think Buckinghamshire's going to be anywhere near that state at the moment. As well as the residential provision there is a take a break scheme whereby carers go to the house and social services also have family support carers as well, to just..... we have a number of families who have significantly more than one disabled youngster in the family and there's a whole raft of other things behind that really. I would like to see, as I said earlier, much more partnership approach to meeting social and educational needs, and getting over this huge gulf. Its probably so many children actually tip down and*	Respite/residential - inadequate provision Respite/residential - mixed view as also concerned that could lead to parents opting out. Respite/residential - do provide take-a-break and support careers Interagency - need stronger partnership between agencies.

F.3 FORMAL CODING

Transcript	Coding
3 Do you feel that SLD schools are coming under more pressure to exclude?	
3.1 Yes. I think we are in that - certainly in this authority - due I think mainly to the move away from the use of out of county placements -	Out-county placement policy. Change away from independent residential schools. Increasing the pressure on school
3.2 - The Education Authority is now coming down very hard on it being an educational placement, -	Out-county placement policy. Change away from independent residential schools. Tightening of criteria employed
3.3 - and try to put the boot fairly and squarely on social services shoulders by saying that you should be providing that boarding, respite provision -	Out-county placement policy. Change away from independent residential schools. Increasing tensions between Education & Social services over out-county. Implication that SSD provision need to be expanded. Changes in one department has knock-on implications for others.
3.4 - and as yet it hasn't been fully decided but having said that children with very much more challenging behaviours there is an expectation that their needs will be met within our local provision -	Out-county placement policy. Change away from independent residential schools. Increasing in pressure on school

3.5 - when in fairness the authority will centrally fund additional support for children with very challenging behaviour.	Out-county placement policy. Change away from independent residential schools. Hardening of criteria Resources - willingness of LEA to provide additional support for issues deemed to be their responsibility.
4 They put additional support into schools?	
4.1 Oh yes I mean what I do here for instance is that I have got a number of youngsters with really very challenging behaviours and on the back of obviously evidence of written reports and requests -	Out-county placement policy. Change away from independent residential schools. Resources - willingness of LEA to provide additional support for issues deemed to be their responsibility. Dependent on evidence protocol
4.2 - the Authority will actually fund additional hours, 25 hours, to ensure that that youngster has the support that they need.	Out-county placement policy. Change away from independent residential schools. Resources - willingness of LEA to provide additional support for issues deemed to be their responsibility. High level of support available
5 That comes pretty close to full time one-to-one doesn't it?	
5.1 Although our philosophy here isn't strictly one-to-one -	Management of challenging behaviour Tensions around one-to-one support.
5a - [No] -	

5.2 - we would use that person to support the group so that the youngster involved would not be aware that that's their minder, because I don't feel that's a terribly productive way of going forward. -	Management of challenging behaviour. Integrated arrangements Covert one-to-one support.
5.3 - There is a dependency factor as well which I am not happy with.	Management of challenging behaviour. One-to-one support. Concern about the dependency relating to one-to-one support
6 So has education's concern been that children have tended to go for social home reasons?	
6.1 - Yes, yes they have.	Out-county placement policy. Change away from independent residential schools. Hardening of criteria Increasing tensions between Education & Social services over out-county. Changes in one department has knock-on implications for others.
7 And there's been no provisions from social services?	
7.1 Not enough. Well there is some respite provision but not nearly enough,-	Local context Social services Inadequate respite provision
7.2 - and the health trust also provides some respite provision as long as the youngster has a fairly significant health issue surrounding their disability and then they will offer some respite. -	Local context Health Respite if child has high dependency needs but not challenging behaviour.

7.3 - We also have an interesting project which is run between social services and NCH which is a local respite place, -	Local context Social services Respite provision provided by independent provider (NCH)

F.4 EXAMPLE OF COLLATION FRAMEWORK

9. EXCLUSION
   - 9.1. Rare
   - 9.2. Child centred philosophy
   - 9.3. Not a solution
   - 9.4. Pressure not to exclude.
   - 9.5. Annual review normal process
   - 9.6. Why exclude?
     - 9.6.1. Comparison with mainstream schools
       - 9.6.1.1.Maintenance of authority
       - 9.6.1.2.League tables
       - 9.6.1.3.National curriculum & OfSTED
       - 9.6.1.4.General pressures of accountability
     - 9.6.2. Rate of deterioration
     - 9.6.3. Blocked by LEA
     - 9.6.4. Parental refusal of residential
     - 9.6.5. Residential too late
     - 9.6.6. No other placement option
   - 9.7. Not a deliberate action to break deadlocks

F.5 COLLATION OF CODED ITEMS

Rate of deterioration

- *HT3: the stage when special schools exclude they probably left, in most cases left it too long*
- *HT1: I think it is the speed and sometimes just that for the protection of the other children and staff....sometimes that happens very quickly.*
- *HT1: sometimes things just blow up very, very quickly ...*
- *HT1: ..... you can call an interim review but when you've got to get 8 or 9 professionals together with parents, that can take you a month.*
- *HT1: To get... a diary date when you can have all those people represented in one place at one time to make some decisions.*
- *HT4: I have to say, there are also times when for the protection of staff and for other children you've got to make a decision fast.*
- *HT2: No improvement or a deterioration in the behaviours generates increasing pressure for action to be taken.*
- *HT2: What may differentiate the decision to permanently exclude from a request for re-assessment may hinge on the rate of deterioration and the speed with which the LEA can secure alternative placement.*
- *HT5: He became very aggressive, and very difficult, and he was then sectioned as well, through his violence, I actually had to have him arrested, which was an awful thing to do - I have never had to do that before , but it was the only option.*
- *HT5: ... his behaviours really until he was year 11 - 12, were containable. It's just that as he got so much bigger and he began to realize his own strength, that he then became terribly unreasonable, and he was sectioned on that basis.*
- *HT4:* So did his behaviour go down quite rapidly at that point? - *Yes it did,*
- *HT4: Usually the speed and urgency I think.*
- *HT4: I think there is a danger that schools try and tough it out,*
- *HT4: To avoid writing history, people will almost deny to themselves, that this particular behaviour was a problem, until it gets the point where the damage is undeniable, either pupils or staff or property, and then suddenly the thing will escalate.*

- *HT4: So it's a crisis which may have taken a while to build, it just gets to the point of no return and you've got to say enough is enough.*
- *HT1: ... sometimes the statutory procedure is too cumbersome.*
- *HT1: I also think this cumbersome procedure can also lead you to feel there is no other option.*

Blocked by LEA

- *HT1: In fact sometimes it's the only way you feel, you will actually get that child's needs met.*
- *HT1: .... you know you are pacified and left to cope or you know, a little bit more resource here, or we'll try this. And ultimately you know you're sticking plasters over something that needs a more radical solution.*
- *HT2: things like out of county placements were easier to get in the past than they are now, certainly in this area, and therefore you could plan for a child to move on somewhere else if you felt you weren't meeting their needs.*
- *HT1: you're more likely to be pushed into a corner where you're left with no other options.*
- *HT3: they didn't really support this search for,.....*(residential placement)
- *HT3: .... it wasn't helped because the parents didn't want to which limited us so much, they didn't want residential....we didn't feel supported in looking for an alternative.*
- *HT3: ....there was the feeling that you could find it but you wouldn't get funded anyway*
- *HT1: I would be saying I can no longer meet this child's needs, and you must find something else.*

Parental refusal of residential

- *HT2: the parents are told that there is no alternative, it has to be this when they've come to the end of the line. So its got to be a residential school .....*
- *HT2: ... would have responded better to a 24 hour residential situation but both lots of parents didn't want that.* But were having problems with her at home? - *Very much so, and still are, because she is still at home.*
- *HT3:* So its his foster parents who were reluctant for him to go to residential? - *Yes. Despite the fact that, in the end they did say yes to it, but it took them, in a sense it took them too long to get to that point, and it was very much, it was actually the mother I think, who was very, very strong lady, who was very determined not to give up.*